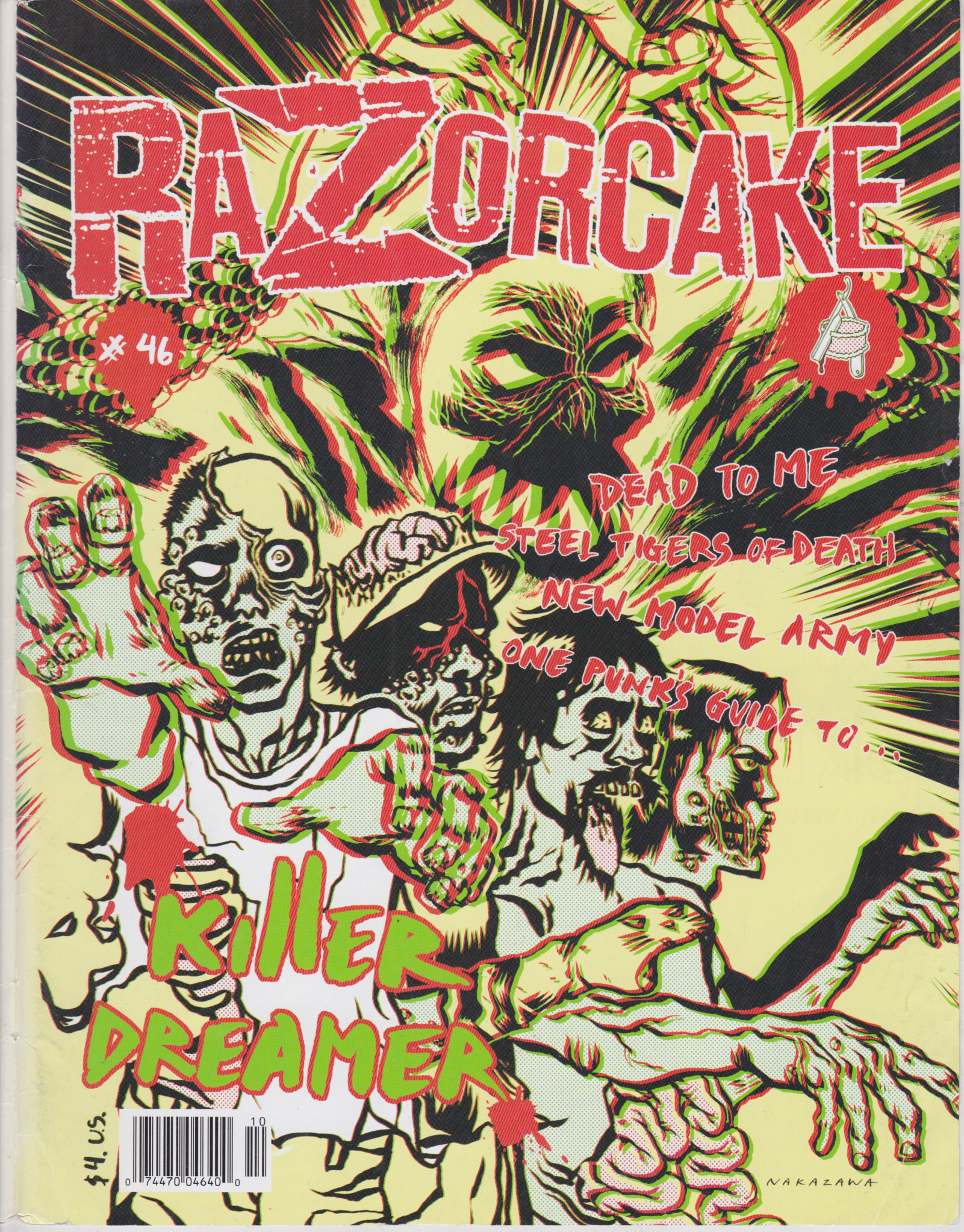
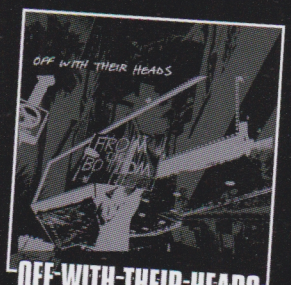

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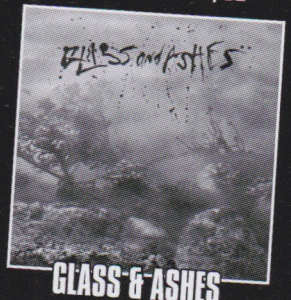
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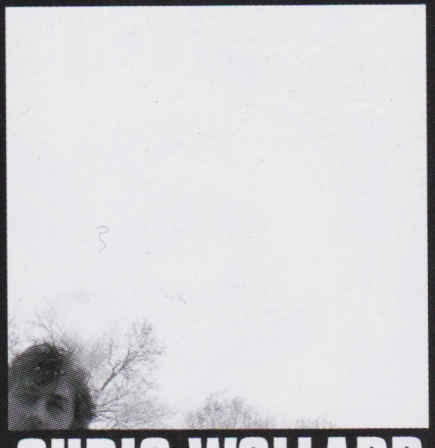
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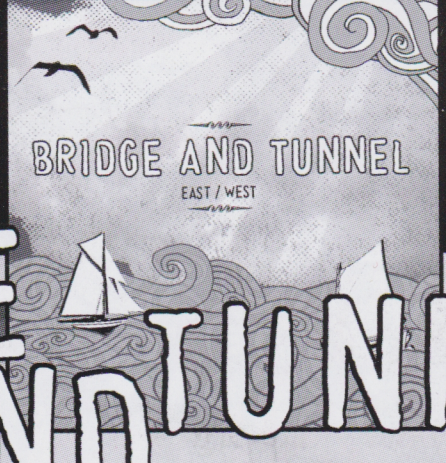
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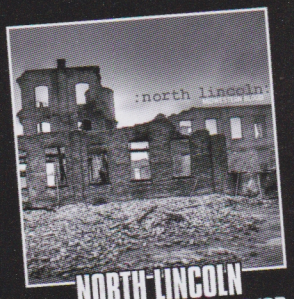


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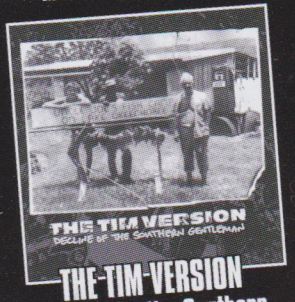


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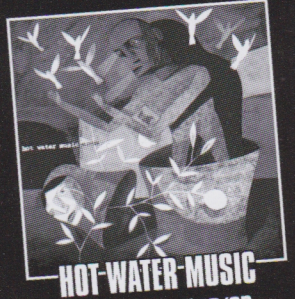




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Razorcake is a bonafide non-profit music magazine dedicated to supporting independent music culture. All donations, subscriptions, and orders directly from us—regardless of amount—have been large components to our continued survival.

It blows me away that Razorcake has been slugging away for close to eight years now. Behind me as I type this is a small room. It's chock full of Razorcake's archives: box upon box of paper masters of the issues, digital backups, and full copies in cellophane. We've covered tens of thousands of bands, artists, and activists; and we're one of the few periodicals in America that puts DIY punk first and foremost without walking the fence with corporate America (that hasn't yet gone out of business in the process). We're doing our best not to merely be footprints on a sandy beach. Although our footprint is small, I'd like to think of us like a bunch of kids walking over just-poured cement.

Chronicling—we're dealing with 34,309 words of record reviews this two-month rotation. Preservation—the first four issues of Razorcake are available free on www.razorcake.org in PDF form. This may sound foolhardy, but I believe that we're helping to protect and propel part of a constantly growing subculture (zits, bad decisions, and all), because there's ample evidence that powers much more powerful than us are willing to treat us in much the same manner that Starbucks does to any small coffee shop in their way.

…And that's why it's important to us that we're non-profit. It's as much a daily mindset as a "mission statement" on a piece of paper.

If *you* would like to give Razorcake some assistance, we're looking for help in the following areas: non-profit grant writer, FileMaker Pro wizard, PHP-nuke website coders, website record review posters, and anyone who has experience with setting up a 501(c)6. If you live in the L.A. area, we could always use a helping hand.

Contact us via www.razorcake.org if you'd like to help out.

Thank you.

–Todd Taylor

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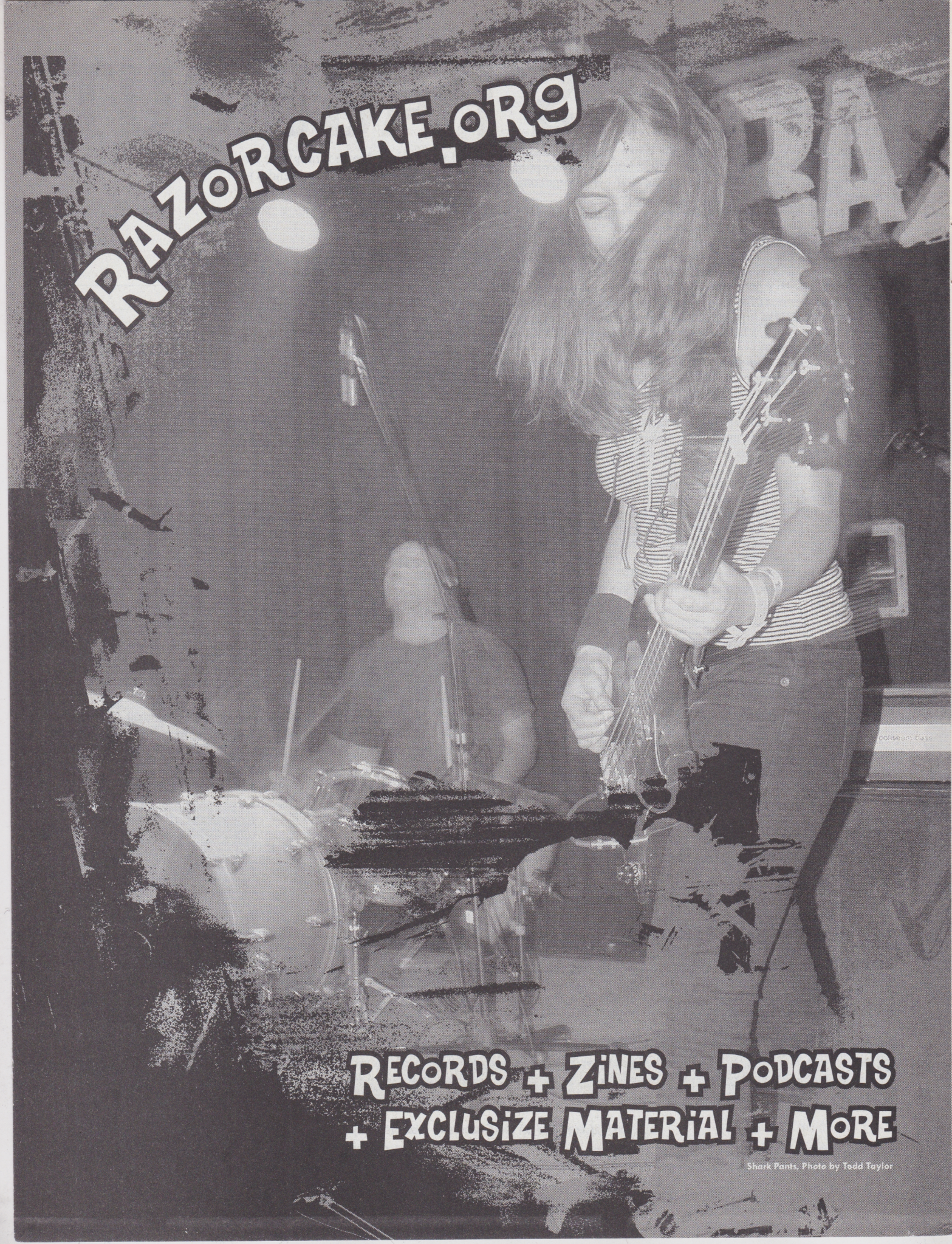
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Shark Pants. Photo by Todd Taylor

A Good Thing

I was feeling awesome: Slurpee in my right hand. My left hand wasn't on the handlebars. It was balled up into a fist and I was shaking it above my head. I was thirteen, pedaling back from school, and I'd just finished the last big incline back home. The fist pumping was due to a song I was singing to myself, really loud in my mind. It was a fifty percent chance I was singing either Huey Lewis And The News or The Circle Jerks. It was a big transitional time in music for me. But I was giving it my all; screaming a song in my head. The streets were empty of traffic. It'd be another hour or two until the adults in the subdivision got off work.

I didn't see the rock until the last split second. It was no larger than a ball of dough for an unbaked cookie; a white, round thing; an eyeball in a field of black asphalt.

My ten-speed's tire bucked. I hit the rock head on, stopping my front tire cold.

I have the strangest natural instincts and reflexes.

I flew over my handlebars. Since I was in mid-fist pump when I hit the rock, I was off balance. My front foot lodged in between the spokes of my front wheel, spun around three quarters of a turn, then I rocketed forward, foot pegged between the spokes and front fork. Luckily, I landed flat on my shoulders.

Wind knocked out of me, all tangled up in my bike, I looked up at the deep blue sky, the hot summer sun, not in any big hurry to get back up again. Sometimes, it's good to just stay put. I laid still and began to take stock. My left palm was road rashed, my back hurt from landing on my books in my backpack. My knees were spared because, even though it was 105°F, we weren't allowed to wear shorts to school.

I was pretty hurt, but no head trauma, which was a novelty. The Slurpee in my right hand? Not even a little dent in the wax cup. The plastic dome was still snapped tight. It was unscathed, pristine, sweating. I took some long pulls from the straw. I remember that feeling, so cool and refreshing inside where I couldn't see, while everything I could see on myself was hot, sticky, and painful to touch.

I had trouble wrangling the bike off of me. My front wheel was taco'd, the spokes loose around my foot. With some wiggling, I was able to break my foot free. But every time I tried to push the bike completely off, it tugged back at me. I soon discovered that the brake lever, the type that follows the curve of the handlebars, had speared through my pants and was stuck into my inner thigh. Having watched *Red Dawn* repeatedly, I knew that I'd have to push the lever out the direction it had come in. I did. It hurt. Then I placed the Slurpee in my crotch as a compress. I laid there for a bit longer until the heat needling up from the asphalt became unbearable. I hobbled home. The night ended with double checking the date of my last tetanus shot.

On July 3rd, I got married to a wonderful lady, Mary-Clare, in my home town. It was a small ceremony. Our close families were there. At first, we planned on getting married in a park where Bighorn sheep hang out, but it was 112 degrees. Too hot. When I stepped into the air-conditioned cool of the courthouse, it triggered a tremendous wave of remembrance. This—our families, our love ones, our humble traditions—are my instinctively protected sips of Slurpee in between getting constantly chewed up and flipped over and stabbed the by the world at large.

Mary-Clare and I kissed before we were supposed to in the ceremony. We couldn't help it.

We knew a good thing was staring us right in the face.

–Todd Taylor

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ISSUE #47
October 1st, 2008

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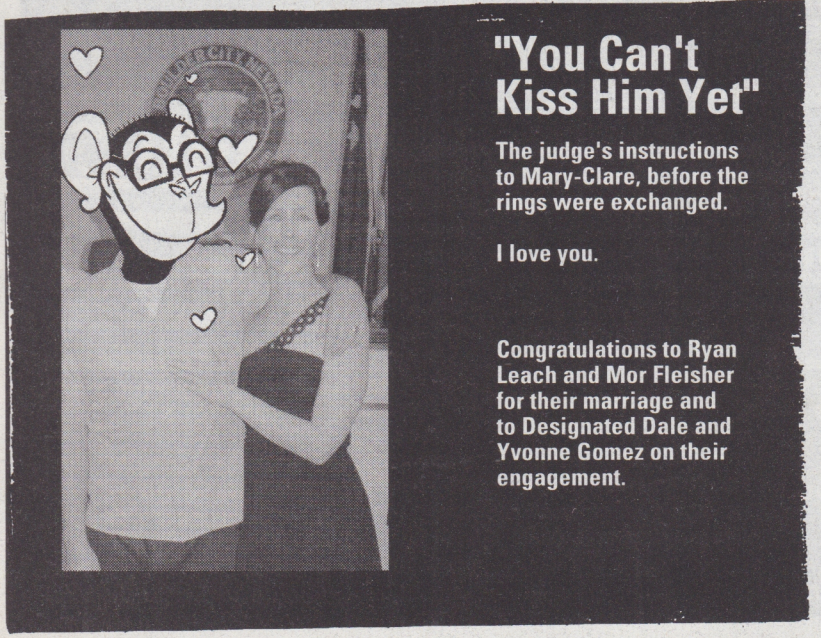
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"Well, life is a constant struggle between being an individual and being a member of the community."
–Sherman Alexie
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

Cover artwork by Kiyoshi Nakazawa (www.myspace.com/dmzine)

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Matthew Odietus, singer of the Candy Snatchers. Rest well.



"You Can't Kiss Him Yet"

The judge's instructions to Mary-Clare, before the rings were exchanged.

I love you.

Congratulations to Ryan Leach and Mor Fleisher for their marriage and to Designated Dale and Yvonne Gomez on their engagement.

THANK YOU: ***Kiyoshi Nakazawa smells your brains... brains... Thanks for the cover; cracks in the sidewalk thanks to Steve Larder for his illo. in Liz's column; mugshot thanks to Nuvia Crisol Guerra for her photo in Jim's column; The no flip-flops rule all depends on the relative humidity thanks to Gus for his illo. in Amy's column; An unamused taco vs. a Purple Rubber Pseudo-Vaginal Device? Bless America thanks to Ryan Gelatin for his illo. in Nørb's column; That bridge behind the Chicken sorta looks like Henry Rollin's soup can cock thanks to Dan "The Eggman" Eggert for his photo in the Rhythm Chicken's column; That moustache comes with a lot of cop'a'tude thanks to Nation of Amanda for her illo. in Dale's column; Those dudes are soooo high and if you keep that in mind, the interview's even funnier thanks to Mitch Clem for his illo. in Nardwuar's column; It looks like the horse can smell your brains... brains... thanks to Brad Beshaw for his illo. in Sean's column; My father had a spider monkey as a pet as a child. When it wanted attention, it would poo in its hand and throw it thanks to Dave Disorder and Art Fuentes for the graphic design and illos. in One Punk's Guide to...; Balloons in graveyards and hawks with bunny ears thanks to Sarah Shay and Lindsay Phillips for the Steel Tigers Of Death interview and photos; "So how do you feel about religion?" thanks to Allan MacInnis, Femke Van Delft, and Albert Lam for the interview, photos, and layout for New Model Army; Full-time slack is a full-time "job" without the job thanks to Andy Harris and Cheryl Shanty for the Killer Dreamer photos and circular saw to the neck! thanks to Lauren Measure for the layout; DMV-approved Christian punks Eiffel Towering without swearing thanks to Adrian Salas and Keith Rosson for Dead To Me interview, layout, and illos.; We try not to be dot gain barbarians thanks to Chris Baxter for his Photoshop skills; wurds spillchicked plenty thanks to Vince, Matt Average, Juan Espinosa, and Jenny Moncayo for lending their eyes to proof reading; "You don't know how to review. Send me things to review. I show you how" thanks to the following reviewers—a thankless task, except in this thanks list for their record, book, zine, and DVD reviews: Keith Rosson, Rene Navarro, Kristen K., Stevo, Bryan Static, Mr. Z, Joe Evans III, CT Terry, Gabe Rock, Dave Williams, Craven Rock, Vincent, Jimmy Alvarado, Matt Average, Mike Frame, Art Ettinger, Mike Faloon, Dontforgetwoundedknee, Dave Dillon, Sean Koepenick, Adrian Salas, Nick Toerner, Dave Disorder, Lord Kveldulfr, Ty Stranglehold, Sarah Shay, Speedway Randy, Reyan Ali, Ollie Mikse, Lauren Trout, Will Kwiatowski, Allan MacInnis, and Aphid Peewit.***

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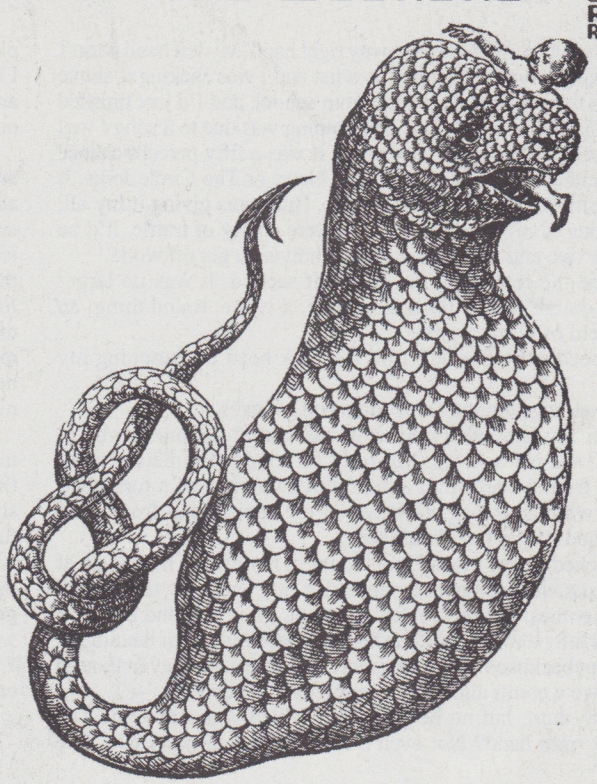
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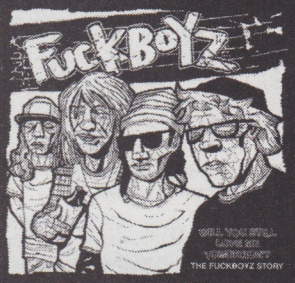




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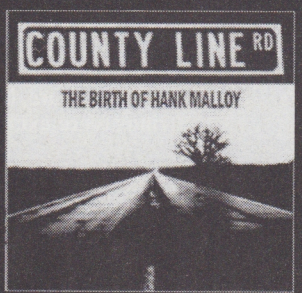
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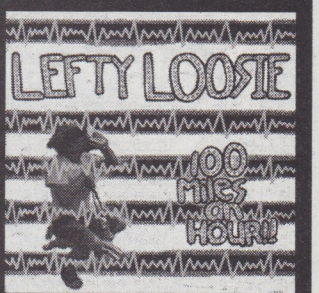
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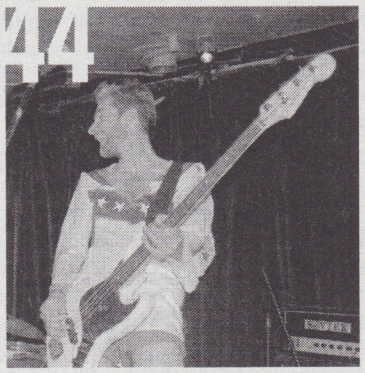
6 Liz O. *Guerrilla My Dreams*
8 Jim Ruland *Lazy Mick*
10 Maddy Tight Pants *Shiftless When Idle*
12 Amy Adoyzie *Monster of Fun*
15 Ben Snakepit *Snakepit*
16 Rev. Nørb *Pøwer Pøp Pølice*
19 Mitch Clem *Something Great!*
20 Rhythm Chicken *Dinghole Reports*
22 Designated Dale *I'm Against It*
24 Art Fuentes *Chico Simio*
25 Kiyoshi Nakazawa *Won Ton Not Now*
26 Nardwuar The Human Serviette *Who Are You?*
30 Sean Carswell *A Monkey to Ride the Dog*
33 Dan Monick *Photo Page*

FEATURES

34 *One Punk's Guide to...* by Todd Taylor
44 *Steel Tigers Of Death* by Sarah Shay
50 *New Model Army* by Allan MacInnis
56 *Killer Dreamer* by Todd Taylor
66 *Dead To Me* by Adrian Salas and Todd Taylor

FAVORITES AND REVIEWS

76 Top 5s *The girl I was obsessed with who lived in San Francisco is a fucking jerk....*
78 Record *The painy strains of a moose being dragged by the nuts from a snowmobile...*
104 Zine *His logistical bumblings are endearing and he is in awe of palm trees....*
109 Book *If there's romanticism at work here, it's been tempered to a knife blade with realism and ardent humility...*
109 DVD *Hot girls being naked doing things very seriously...*









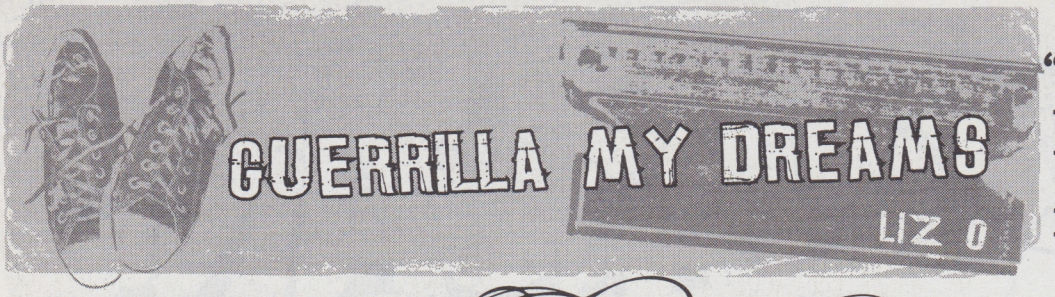
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"We couldn't undo the disaster, but we could move forward."

The Big One

Northridge, California, January 17, 1994, 4:31 AM

A few years before that morning, I had met some girls from Beirut. Once in a while, they would talk about life before the U.S., about alarms signaling the nightly bombings as they scurried into hiding places to dodge shells flying through windows. Two hours before dawn on that Monday morning, I thought about a city I had only heard about in the vague terms of teenagers who were still shaken by memories. I thought their stories had invaded my dreams. That I was in Beirut and that this small ranch house where I lived was being shelled.

That couldn't have been possible. This was the San Fernando Valley, suburban U.S., at a time when war was the furthest thing from our minds. But that jolt, it almost tossed me from my bed. And then there was another one. And another. And they kept coming, lasting for about a minute, although it seemed like hours.

I had been sleeping Pippi Longstocking style, with my feet on my pillow and my head under the covers. I pushed my hand up from under an afghan and grabbed the footboard, clenching cold black metal as though it were a life preserver, and squeezed my eyes shut until I could feel the skin around my temples crinkle. There was the sound of glass shattering, of wood giving way to some unknown force and large, solid objects hitting the ground. The textbooks on my dresser had fallen on my feet. I curled myself into a ball and called out to my sister, with whom I shared a room.

"Lex, what's going on?"

The answer should have been obvious. We had been through plenty of earthquakes before. But no previous shake was like this. This didn't have that slightly sea-sickening roll. Instead, it was all jackhammer pounds beating us to submission.

You can't grow up in Southern California without going through several earthquake drills a year. The rules were always the same: get under a table or desk and protect your head and neck. If you can't duck under anything, move into a doorway. In actuality, when a big one hits, these guidelines aren't options. We had neither a desk nor table in our bedroom and the door, which had been shut, was blocked on both sides. Instead, when the big one hit, all we could do was cling to our beds and hope that we didn't get hit by shards of glass or chunks of ceiling fan.

It ended with sirens, ear-piercing alarms that were either left over from the Cold War or intended specifically for a situation like this. I cautiously opened my eyes and turned my head towards the bedroom window. There was not a trace of light.

We could hear our mother from the hallway. My sister will swear that she was screaming, "My china!" while mother will insist that she was calling out for her children. Whatever it was, her voice was muffled by the sound of actual china flying out of cupboards and breaking against both the floor and the walls.

We're supposed to be prepared for these things, but how could we be ready for something that gave no warning? If we had flashlights in our room, they were now buried under mounds of books, CDs, and the doll collection that we didn't pack away upon hitting puberty. The same could be said for our pants and shoes. And so we dug through things we forgot we had until we could find bathrobes and slippers. Then we climbed through a mess of unidentified objects until we hit the door, which we jerked until it would open.

Our parents were standing in the living room with our brother, trying to guide us out of the house. Every cupboard and closet had been thrust open with nearly all of the contents strewn on the ground. Jagged-edged fragments of tableware poked through the mess and a pungent cocktail of Wild Turkey and barbecue sauce permeated the air.

The city lights had disappeared and with them the dull, plastic haze that marks L.A.'s nighttime skyline. There were stars; hundreds of tiny, twinkling lights. I hadn't seen anything like this since summer camp in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. It was beautiful, a densely jeweled cloak covering a disaster we hadn't yet stopped to comprehend. But the night air smelled oddly, and strongly, of gas.

There were no police, firefighters, or paramedics outside, just a smattering of neighbors in various stages of undress, still wiping sleep from their eyes. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, there's no time for fear. That comes later, after you have the chance to pause and give a conscious thought to the situation. In those first few hours, thinking gives way to doing. You're in a state of constant action, trying to prove to yourself that you are still alive and plan to stay that way. Afterwards, maybe days or weeks later, you will sit around with the others who were there and you will try to piece together what actually happened. And when you do this, you will be caught between laughter and tears.

The men of the neighborhood went from house to house, turning off the gas and reminding everyone not to smoke until they took care of the leaks. The rest of us looked around to get a count of who was outside. Alice, our ninety-something-year-old neighbor, was missing. The men went to her house and knocked, kicking open the door when there was no answer. She wasn't injured, but since she was hard of hearing, she was oblivious to the sirens and crashes of glass and brick.

My dad brought Alice to his car and scooted her into the back seat, where my brother was resting. I was in the front—I think with my sister—maybe fiddling with the car radio to see if we could find out what was happening.

Right around the time that we learned that this was not only an earthquake, but one with an epicenter in our neighborhood,

Alice collapsed cold onto my eleven-year-old brother. Everyone out on the sidewalk gasped, fearing she had died. My mom tried to edge him out from under her. Somebody checked for a pulse. Thankfully, she was alive.

Nobody dared to reenter their homes that night. One major earthquake inevitably leads to dozens of aftershocks and this was no different. With every subsequent rumble, there was a rush towards the place where, hopefully, nothing would fall.

As dawn broke, someone around the corner poured coffee from his catering truck. The guy who owned the local McDonald's served breakfast. And every neighbor we had never known walked the blocks of Northridge awestruck by the damage, from fallen trees to crumbled chimneys to collapsed houses. If we made the front page of the *Times* or the top of the television news, we didn't know about it. We were isolated, left with no electricity, phone service, or water. But, even when you are essentially cut off from the world you knew, news travels in repeated bits of radio broadcasts mixed with gossip. All the schools in the neighborhood were closed; that was a given. Soon, we learned that our high school was demolished; whole buildings having caved in just an hour before the wrestling team was set to practice, the story went.

It was every teenager's dream. Our high school had closed, seemingly forever. I had prayed for it the night before, the half-assed plea to god made by lazy and wicked Catholic school kids twice a year.

Please let something happen so that I won't have to take this AP American History final.

Later on, I sat out on our front lawn in the cut-off Levi's I wore every day, an oversized Cure shirt, and the bandana I used to conceal my grimy hair.

I didn't mean for you to do this.

I had spent the bulk of my seventeen years complaining about life in Northridge. It was, I would tell you, "totally pedestrian," and I would have elaborated on this by using such terms as "banal," "insipid," and "trendy-ass posers." By my junior year of high school, I wanted nothing more than to escape, maybe to London or New York City or, at the very least, a Hollywood goth club. But no matter how dramatically I griped, nothing could change the fact that this was home, the only one I could remember. And while the house was still standing, our lives had been thrown into disarray. It took less than a minute for nature to decimate the years of labor that went into building our neighborhood.

We couldn't undo the disaster, but we could move forward. And so I went inside and helped my mom clean up some of the mess.

–Liz Ohanesian



STEVE LARDER
WWW.STEVELARDER.CO.UK

It took less than a minute for nature to decimate the years of labor that went into building our neighborhood.



"Why have I lost feeling in my nipples?"

THE SEARCH FOR THE PERFECT PUB

Top 10 Pubs Visited on a Recent Trip to Ireland and Northern Ireland

What makes a good Irish pub? A small, dark room with lots of wood? The smell of potatoes drifting from the kitchen? Friendly conversation from the regulars? Or is it as simple as a bartender who knows how to pour a proper pint of Guinness?

During a recent trip to Ireland this summer, Mrs. Mick and I went in search of the perfect pub. According to my journal, we enjoyed a drink at approximately forty licensed premises, of which twenty-five or so were what you could call true Irish pubs.

The word "pub" comes from the word "public house," and I thought my search ought to stay true to it origins, so I excluded hotels, restaurants, night clubs, and distilleries from the list, even though most, if not all, of these establishments contained a bar area that Americans would identify as a pub.

Why so many pubs? That's where the booze is, stoopid! In all seriousness, the exchange rate between the dollar and the euro sucks ($1.6:€1) and in Northern Ireland, which is on the English pound, it's even worse ($2:£1). A pint of Guinness would run anywhere from €2.80 to €4 in the south and £2.25 to £2.50 in the north, i.e., not all that different from what I'd pay at my local Irish bar in San Diego.

The price of food, however, especially in restaurants, was exorbitant. A chicken sandwich in the north of Ireland, for example, could cost you £8.85, i.e., $18. It was much cheaper to get our calories from the super food/wonder drug that is Guinness.

So it is my pleasure to present the official Lazy Mick Guide to Ireland's Top Ten Pubs.

10. Johnny Joe's, Cushendall: The pub stands on what once was the bottom floor of a house. The walls are all load-bearing, so tearing them down wasn't an option. So instead of one smallish pub, it feels like several intimate ones. The benches and chairs face the middle of the room, forcing you to interact with your "housemates."

On the night we went to Johnny Joe's, we sat in what was once the kitchen and there was a ledge above our table that opened up behind the bar so that we didn't have to get up to order drinks—the bartender just passed them through the scuttle. One of the patrons was so intoxicated that he insisted on buying drinks for each new arrival. Each time he left for drinks, he'd come back with another beer for himself, forgetting that he already had one. At one point, he had four beers on his table. He was full of vulgar stories that rambled on and on and had neither point nor conclusion, kind of like this story.

Cushendall's runner-up: An Caman. During my last visit to Cushendall in 2004, I spent many memorable hours here drinking Red Bull and vodka.

9. The Weigh Inn, Claddagh: Just to the west of Galway's city center, across from the River Corrib, sits the village of Claddagh, famous for the Claddagh Ring—which presently adorns the ring fingers of Mr. and Mrs. Mick. Claddagh is an old fishing village and the pub's name comes from the practice of weighing the catch as the fishermen return from Galway Bay.

Galway's runner-up: The King's Head Tavern. A three-story structure with its own banquet facility doesn't exactly qualify as a pub, but a hell of a good time can be had there virtually any time of day or night.

8. McDaid's, Dublin: You'd think a pub located a few steps off Grafton Street to be trendy and expensive, but McDaid's is neither. In fact, it's been there since the late 17th century. Think about that for a second.

McDaid's may not be featured in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, but Irish author John Banville has written a series of noir-ish crime novels set in Dublin during the 1950s under the pseudonym Benjamin Black (highly recommended). The protagonist likes to drink whiskey at a bar called McGonigle's, which Banville/Black based on McDaid's.

Dublin's runner-up: Hill 16. Tiny pub north of the Liffey around the corner from the local OTB. Friendly bartender, lovely Guinness.

7. The Hunting Lodge, Andersontown: When visiting a pub for the first time in wild West Belfast, it's generally a good idea to go with someone who knows the place so that you don't wander somewhere you're not wanted. Most bars in Belfast are neutral, but there are still a few that cling to their old affiliations. I'm not saying that you'll be visited by a punishment squad if you drop in unannounced, but behind the bar there's a positively massive poster from the John Wayne film *The Quiet Man*. The message is as subtle as a brick through a windshield, but good craic nonetheless.

West Belfast's runner-up: Balmoral Hotel. Recently renovated, a grand place to meet up before a night on the town.

6. Sean Og's, Bunbeg: I think we went to Sean Og's (the word "Og" means "son of") three times during a weekend in Donegal on the northwest coast, but I only clearly remember one of them. We'd just come back from a long walk along the coast and we were parched and a wee bit hungover from the night before. There is nothing like the first pint of the day, aka "The Healer" and it was kind to us, though I think the double Bailey's and Crème de Menthe were overkill.

Bunbeg's runner-up: Hudi Beag's (pronounced Hoody Bog's). This place was a bit quainter than Sean Og's but doesn't open until after 4 PM.

5. MacDiarmid's and MaGann's, Doolin: I put these two together because they're located across the street from each other. Doolin is famous around the world for its traditional Irish music, which can be heard in three of Doolin's principle pubs seven nights a week, 365 days a year. We started at MacDiarmid's and listened to a few sessions before moving across the street. The better band was at MaGann's and the bodhran (goatskin drum) player was the most talented I'd ever seen. I wish I could remember his name, but a half dozen Powers and Guinness will do that to you.

4. An Cuinne, Fermahanagh: Although it's a little on the new side, this pub sits on a bend in the road (hence it's name, which means "The Corner") between the coast road and Brandon Mountain on the Dingle peninsula in the west of Ireland. We came in after a long hike up and down a mountain to see the crumbling ruins of a Cromwellian watch tower. When we reached the top, the skies opened up and soaked us to the skin. The proprietor plied us with hot whiskeys and sat down with us to tell us all about her adventures in San Diego when she was a young girl. Irish hospitality at its best.

Dingle's runner-up: Sadly, none, as we were too exhausted from our climb but Dingle town has a number of nice-looking pubs along the waterfront.

3. Eamon Doran's, Temple Bar: As close as you'll find to a punk rock bar in Dublin. Manky beer, weird music, and a reckless mix of Europeans on their holidays make Eamon Doran's a dangerously fun place to lighten your wallet. When I came to Dublin in 2002 for a punk rock festival, Eamon Doran's was



NUVIA CRISOL GUERRA

There's a special saying that friends old and new say to one another in pubs: "It's your round, fuckwit!"

the unofficial after-show hangout. As an added bonus, the pizza place next door stays open late and sells surprisingly good pizza by the slice.

2. Mariner's, Waterfoot: During our stay in Cushendall, Mrs. Mick and I walked from the caravan park, down the coastal road, through town, around Red Bay, and into the seaside village of Waterfoot on the Antrim coast in order to watch the Euro Cup Finals between Spain and Germany—a journey of about three miles. Either I was exceptionally thirsty or The Mariner's serves the coldest, smoothest Guinness in Northern Ireland.

Waterfoot's runner-up: The Saffron, located right across the street from The Mariner's.

Before I announce the best pub in Ireland, Belfast's runner-ups.

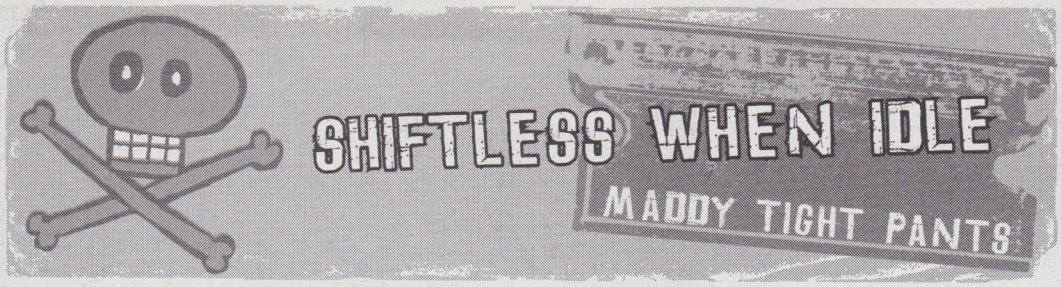
Second runner-up: The Crown Liquor Saloon. Located in the city center and outfitted with spacious snugs with actual gaslights, it's easily the most charming pub in the north of Ireland, but it's also its most well-known and usually overrun with tourists.

First runner-up: The Botanic, named after the Botanical Gardens, which everyone calls "The Bot." It's the biggest, most crowded drinking establishment in Belfast. This can be a good thing and a bad thing.

1. Duke of York, Belfast: Hands down my favorite pub on the island. First and foremost, it's a whiskey bar with an Irish whiskey list two pages long. They had more varieties of Bushmills than I've ever seen in one place before, and that includes the Bushmills distillery. I sampled the 12-year-old Locke's Reserve (a touch of caramel), a fifteen-year-old Connemara (hints of peat), and a twelve-year-old Red Breast (why have I lost feeling in my nipples?). As far as décor goes, the Duke of York is covered in old whiskey mirrors and the windows give onto an alleyway festooned with red geraniums spilling out of flower baskets. Plus, rumor has it that Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams used to pull pints here.

If you find yourself in Ireland, I hope this list is of some use to you. In Ireland, there's a special saying that friends old and new say to one another in pubs: "It's your round, fuckwit!"

–Jim Ruland



"It's better to be the absolute last than just vaguely toward the bottom somewhere."

Volleyball, Beheadings, and Celibacy!

Attention all punks! No, not the punk rockers who were the "cool" punks at their high school, the ones who managed to turn their love of semi-obscure music into a viable social commodity! No! I'm calling on the true dorks, the ones who turned their love of semi-obscure music into… a love of semi-obscure music! Yes!

Now that we've dismissed the non-dorks from our reading audience, we can commence to the Matter At Hand (M.A.H.)! For those of us who spent the majority of our high school days memorizing the lyrics to Dead Kennedys songs and then creating a game in which you would compete with your sister to see who could belt out the lyrics to "Let's Lynch the Landlord" with the least number of errors (um, for example), this column is for you! You see, the devotion to the minute details of Mr. Biafra's phraseology did come at a price! To be more specific, this price was typically calculated at 10:20 AM every Tuesday and Thursday for four years. It could be roughly calculated using the following equation:

Number of Lines of "Kill the Poor" sung correctly minus Number of Lines of "Kill the Poor" sung incorrectly equals number of points one might score in a game of volleyball.

Gym class! Given my inattention to matters involving coordination, practice, or skill, this could have been viewed as a challenge, a way to expand my horizons, a way to break out of my narrow subculture, and expand the definition of punk to include strong pitching skills and the ability to do a pull-up. However, it could just as easily be viewed as an opportunity to do nothing. Which is exactly what I did. Consequently, I was usually picked close to last. Not last, exactly. The final two spots were reserved for my best friend and for a girl with poor hygiene who refused to change into her gym uniform. No showers plus no gym shorts equals poor performance in dodge ball. Who knew this column would involve so much math?

However, I did not let this bother me. In fact, I was constantly trying to be picked last, not third-to-last or second-to-last, but absolutely the worst, the bottom of the barrel—*last*. No, this was not a misguided attempt to get into heaven faster under the "last shall be first" clause! This was not an effort to make people in my high school hate me more than they already did! This was not about joining the last-place girl in a race to the bottom of personal hygiene! No! I knew then that it's better to be the absolute last than just vaguely toward the bottom somewhere. I mean, being *last* has historical importance! No one remembers who the third-last person was to die of the Bubonic Plague! No one knows who the second heaviest U.S. president was! These things are trivial! But, the *last*! Now there's something you can get excited about!

And so, in celebration of my rejection of tenth grade volleyball and all such related matters, I bring to you: Five of the Best "Lasts" of All Time! In No Particular Order Because I'm Bad at Ranking Things!

1. Last Person to Be Guillotined Publicly in France!

Okay, let's admit it. If there is going to be capital punishment, which I'm assuming most *Razorcake* readers (myself included!) oppose, using a guillotine isn't the worst idea. It definitely meets the most important criteria for any event, situation, procedure, or individual: Ridiculosity! I mean, besides crucifixion (which, come to think of it, might even be more ridiculous), you can't make a more obvious point than by chopping someone's head off. But enough of these tactical arguments! On to the central issue at hand, um, head? (Note: I am an idiot! But I blame it on the genetic material inherited from my dad, who used to tell the following joke: What did the Polish Olympian do with his gold medal? Answer: He had it bronzed.)

So, the last person to be guillotined publicly in France was Eugene Weidmann, who strangled an American tourist in 1939. The night before his beheading, a huge crowd gathered in Versailles to witness the gory event. Hotels, eager to capitalize on the bloodlust of the French citizenry, charged exorbitant rates and still managed to fill up every room. However, photos of the event published in French newspapers proved so deeply disturbing that a law was passed a week later banning public executions. So, although Eugene suffered a gruesome death, at least he can take posthumous comfort from his inadvertent participation in a historic event! Incidentally, while researching this matter, I came upon the following last words from a fellow beheaded individual. "Now gentlemen, may I give you a last piece of advice? Turn away. This is not going to be a pleasant sight." Indeed!

2. Last Person to Receive a Lobotomy!

This is one of those situations where, if you were the unlucky individual in question, you might spend the rest of your life asking yourself, "Why have I been cursed with such bad luck? Why me, dear Lord? Couldn't my procedure have been scheduled for the following week, thereby allowing some other poor individual to achieve historical semi-significance instead?" But then, in this situation, it's quite likely that you wouldn't even be able to articulate such a notion!

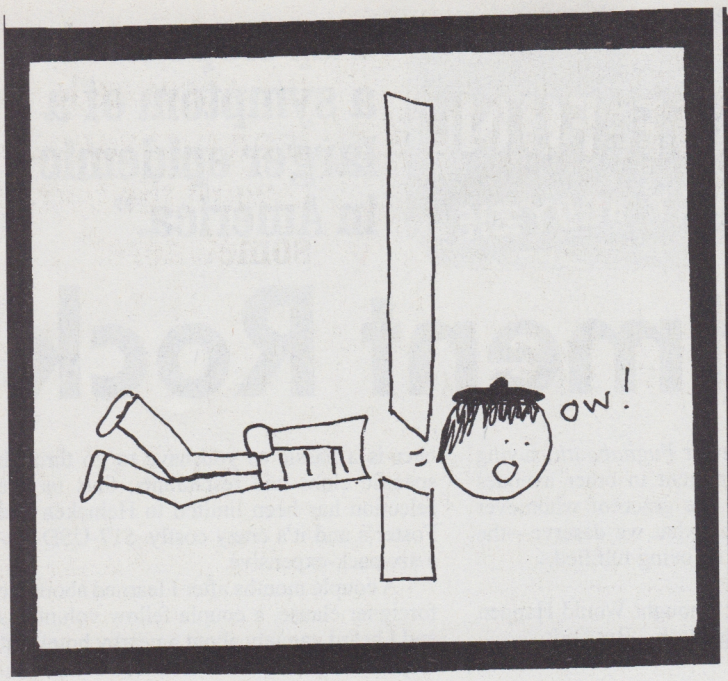
If ever there was a medical procedure that was so obviously stupid, it would be the lobotomy. Invented by a psychiatrist named Walter Freeman, this enlightened procedure involved (Note: queasy readers skip this sentence!) taking an instrument closely resembling an ice pick, inserting in above a patient's eyeball into their brain, and then moving the instrument around, damaging whatever parts of the frontal lobe happened to be in scraping range. Science!

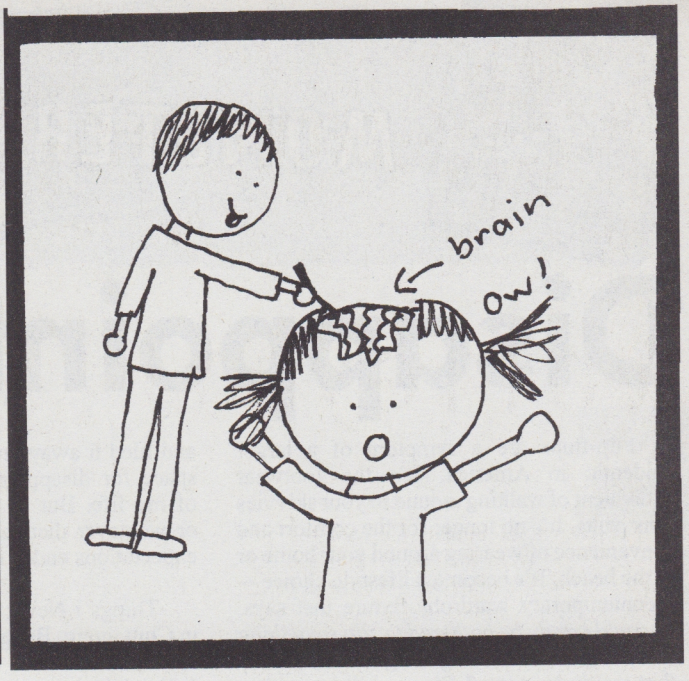
In February 1967, a housewife named Helen Mortenson had the honor of being the ice pick's last victim. She later, not surprisingly, died of a brain hemorrhage. Dr. Freeman retired from his brain hackery and lived out the rest of his days traveling around in a camper meeting with former patients in an unsuccessful attempt to redeem his once good name.

3. The Last American Killed in World War One!

Note: Please file (as it is my understanding that *Razorcake* maintains an elaborate filing system to organize these matters for future historical analysis) this paragraph under: Ridiculously bad luck.

So, you'd like to think that the last soldier to die in a war that killed twenty million people would have some sort of





Abandon your telesphobia (the fear of being last) once and for all!

significance. You know, the kind of death that really ties the whole thing together such that, during a bedtime story, a father could end with, "And then young Johnny bravely volunteered to be the first to march into the newly liberated Berlin, but tragically fell victim to a sniper's bullet."

No! In fact, most of the time, death just points out the stupidity of the situation itself, which I think this "famous last" illustrates quite nicely. Germany and the Allied powers signed the armistice ending the military conflict on November 11, 1918. (Although, on a dorky historical note, the Treaty of Versailles, which formally ended the war, would not be signed until 1919.) So, the hostilities were scheduled to end at 11AM. At that moment, the unfortunate Private Henry Gunther was advancing toward the German border. At the exact moment that a messenger arrived announcing that the war was ending at 11AM, two bullets hit Gunther, killing him at 11:01 AM. Note to self: If I am ever called upon to act as a messenger to notify warring parties that the conflict has ended, I will NOT stop to get coffee or even slow down slightly to better contemplate the lyrical significance of Crucial Youth's "Cross at the Green (Not in Between)!" Lives are at stake!

4. Last Remaining Shakers!

Okay, so there are actually still four Shakers remaining, which, sadly, means that they have to split this honor amongst themselves. And yet even this small number is a real achievement, given that this Protestant sect formed 225 years ago and...all of its members are celibate. Yes, celibate. And no, the Shakers do not rely on immaculate conception to bolster their ranks! They do what any good religion does. They recruit! Shockingly, a religion that bans sex has had difficulty attracting followers in recent years. Since they're down to four members, the Shakers have been contemplating their legacy in the (increasingly likely) event that they become extinct. When Arnold Hadd, one of the remaining few, was asked by a reporter whether he was okay with the idea of the Shaker's property being made into a touristy, reenactment-based museum, Hadd responded, "Nay. Of course it's not but, I mean, what am I going to do about it? I'll be dead!" True!

5. Last Person to Complete the Tour de France!

Perhaps no individual better exemplifies the potential greatness in being last than Austrian bicyclist Gerhard Schoenbacher. You see, rather than attempt to *win* the Tour de France, Gerhard tried to *lose* it. And this is more difficult than you might imagine. First of all, you have to complete the race to finish last, or else you don't finish at all. Most riders who are really doing poorly simply choose to drop out, but Gerhard managed to continue onward to cement his last place position. And he succeeded. However, *one* last place finish wasn't enough! In 1980, he tried again! This time, the Tour de France officials were more than a little annoyed. You see, since the race started in 1903, bicycling enthusiasts have referred to the last place finisher as the Lanterne Rouge or Red Lantern. And this person frequently ends up becoming a popular cult figure. This was exactly what happened with Mr. Schoenbacher. "I was very popular with the crowd and I continued to tell everyone that I liked being last," Gerhard recently told a reporter. "[The organizers] said I made a mockery out of the tour. To prevent further degradation of their sport, officials instituted a temporary rule. After each stage, the bicyclist in last place would be sent home. Of course, the loophole was obvious. Mr. Schoenbacher simply finished second-to-last every day, and was rewarded with yet another last place finish! Congratulations, sir!

The lesson from all of this? It's simple! Abandon your telesphobia (the fear of being last) once and for all! Who knows? You could even end up being immortalized in one of the greatest historical journals (Read: punk zines) of our time? And that's clearly a greater honor than being the first person to walk on the moon or the first person to eat a gummi sour patch kid!

The End!

–Maddy



"Flip-flops are a symptom of a larger epidemic in America."

Disappointment Rock

Flip-flops are a symptom of a larger epidemic in America. It's the footwear equivalent of walking around in your skivvies sans pants. It's no longer for the comfort and convenience of wearing around your home or to the beach. It's become a lifestyle choice—a contemporary wardrobe fixture that says, *"I could barely be bothered to slip something onto my feet to prevent getting tetanus and so that the dude at the 7-Eleven will let me buy a pack of smokes."* Maybe I'm old-fashioned, still tethered to archaic notions of how we ought to present ourselves to the world when we step out of our homes. There's something to be said for *getting dressed.*

I'm not devolving into some type of fashion dictator—I just believe in shoes.

And then I moved to Bangladesh. My daily footwear choices are between two pairs of black flip-flops. Boots, flats, sneakers, loafers, and closed-toe, lace-up shoes are an anomaly. Potato sack-like tunics and oversized pajama pants hang, neatly pressed, in my closet—my lack of shoe choices are the least of my concerns. Long gone are the days of vintage day dresses with cowboy boots, Muslim countries don't look fondly on uncovered flesh and the subcontinent is no place for muggy boots.

But I expected this, because I'm a big girl and when I learned that I'd be living in Bangladesh, I packed away any piece of clothing that may show my womanly shape and my adorable dancing shoes. They're all sealed in cardboard boxes sitting patiently in a Portland basement, waiting for my return to floozy-dom. In the meantime, I've stopped lamenting the demise of Western civilization via flip-flops, and have even gone so far as to embrace those flattened slices of rubber beneath my feet because this is how they roll in these parts and I's gots to respect that.

Maybe it comes with age and maturity, but I'm finally learning ways to cope with disappointment by expecting it. Disappointment is defined as the feeling of displeasure when one's expectations are not realized. In order to abate this feeling of displeasure, I just learned to not expect much.

Don't expect to wear anything but flip-flops while living in Bangladesh. Done. Disappointment averted.

There's a short list of other non-expectations that I never imagined would be met in Chittagong. I conjured this list and filed it away under *Fugitaboutit*, saving space for disappointment in other avenues of my life. But by the grace of whomever or whatever dictates what we deserve—the expectations ended up being fulfilled.

Things I Never Thought Would Happen in Chittagong, Bangladesh—But Did:

1. Drink liquor.
2. Get hit on (the flirty-kind, not the having-small-stones-pelted-at-me kind).
3. See a show.

* * *

Remember prohibition?

No, I didn't think so. In your lifetime thus far, alcohol has flowed freely across these great United States of America. As long as you're of legal age, because we all respect the National Minimum Drinking Age Act of 1984 of course, you're able to buy and consume as much alcohol as your body will allow before you stumble onto a sidewalk to expel any excessive shots or pints that you may have unwittingly consumed in your overzealous celebration of the prohibition repeal. Isn't that why we drink, to celebrate our legal right to do so?

As a proponent of liberty and shitfacedness, I've always been a hearty celebrant of Hamm's and Wild Turkey. But when I moved to Bangladesh, I resigned myself to the idea that there are entire countries where prohibition still exists.

Talk about having to prepare myself for disappointment—I moved to a country where booze is illegal.

You're thinking, "Smooth move, ex-lax." But I prepared myself for long stretches of sobriety by tapping into a steely reserve that lies within in me—something called stoicism. And also because I knew that I'd have the opportunity to travel out of Bangladesh during vacation breaks where I would get my drink on in neighboring fun-advocating countries.

So you can imagine my glee, and ultimate bummed-outness, when I learned that there is a loophole in Bangladeshi prohibition laws—turns out that alcohol is only illegal to Bangladeshi citizens (presumably Muslims, even though there's a Hindu population) and foreigners are free to sully their bodies as they wish. The negatives are that buying beer is a hassle as you have to go through specific clubs and restaurants; thus far the selection has been limited to Heineken and Foster's and it's crazy costly. $17-USD-for-a-six-pack-expensive.

A couple months after I learned about the foreigner clause, a couple fellow volunteers and I heard vaguely about a nearby hotel that may house a *bar*. We were there before you could even say, "I'll have whatever is your cheapest beer."

We found ourselves in a dark, velvety-walled roomful of men staring as we took a seat at one of the center tables. Unsurprisingly, we were the only women there and the staff fell over themselves to serve us. As it were, their cheapest beer was $4 for a can of Heiney and I'm much too proud, and pathetically broke, to drop that much change for beer. Instead, I perused the drink menu and found something called "Local Whiskey" for two bucks. The bartender wouldn't stop grinning when I asked for it.

It arrived in a drinking glass the size of a toilet paper cardboard tube, with a dollop of clear liquid at the bottom.

"Well, how is it?" My friends asked after I took a sip.

All I could muster after my taste buds uncurled themselves was, "It tastes like burning."

* * *

In lieu of coffee shops, I sometimes find myself trying to write at a local fast-food chain down the street from the school where I work and live. It was during one of these late evenings where I bought a sub-par salad-like meal and a pineapple slushy, settled onto a high stool, and tried to scribble thoughts into my journal.

Something inexplicable happened. Of all the situations that I figured I would find myself in while in Chittagong, being picked up never even made the list of possibilities.

He was a Pakistani student studying at the Chittagong Medical College and flirted with me as if he just completed an online course entitled, "How to *Make Friendship** with Ladies."

"Do you believe in ESP?" he asked and proceeded to play this pseudo-mind reading/math game with me where the punchline is "There are no kangaroos in Denmark!"

When he saw that I wasn't impressed, he



GUS

Isn't that why we drink, to celebrate our legal right to do so?

asked another question, "Have you seen the movie *Titanic*?"

"Yeah." I remember watching it with Gus, about a decade ago, at the second-run movie theater in town. We paid two dollars each and snuck in a whole bucket of fried chicken to get us through the long film.

"What did you like about it?" He shifted in his seat and leaned in closer to me. I tried to surreptitiously slide my slushee out of his reach. All I could think was *roofies*.

"Eh, it was interesting, I guess."

"Anything else?" He leaned casually on his elbow and his shoulders met his ears. As he sat there in his crooked posture, I noticed dark curly body hair peeking out from his T-shirt and was summarily even less interested.

I was trying to figure out where he was going with this, "The special effects were impressive."

"But was there anything else you like? Like about the story or something?"

It seemed obvious that my obvious girl-response should have been, "*Oh, I loved the romance in the film! It was such a romantic love story. Leo is so dreamy!*" But I'm not that obvious. "Nah, I just thought it looked good."

He gave up and moved onto a time-tested line, "Do you believe in astrology?" I braced myself and he asked, "What's your sign?"

I refrained from saying, "My sign? It's *Stop*."

* * *

The first three things I learned to thump out on my midget cherry red electric bass guitar were the theme song to Adam West's *Batman* series, a bastardized version of Danny Elfman's *Simpsons* theme, and the first few measures to Metallica's "Enter Sandman." I learned the TV show theme songs because I was a child addicted to television, but I didn't practice that Metallica riff because I'm a hesher from way back when. I played it because it was easy.

Which makes me wonder the reason behind why metal is seemingly always the ground floor that kids from developing nations will crawl through as their first rite of passage into rebellious music from the West. When Mahreen invited me to an event she was organizing, Rock-A-Mania at Muslim Hall, I wasn't surprised to hear Metallica and Iron Maiden covers all night. I wasn't stoked on it, but I wasn't surprised either. Being surprised would imply that I expected something more—but I'm on an anti-disappointment mission and try to be devoid of expectations. It was both comforting and disconcerting to see a room full of black T-shirts thrashing about to bands made up of privileged Bangladeshi high school kids. Too bad they weren't dancing to Japanther or Girl Talk or anything remotely good. But at least there was a show.

This was also the first time I wore flip-flops to a show. And I'm pretty sure a cockroach the size of a mobile phone crawled across my toes. So uncool.

–Amy Adoyzie
amyadoyzie.com

**Make Friendship* is a Bengali term for, you know, making *special* friends.

git Some

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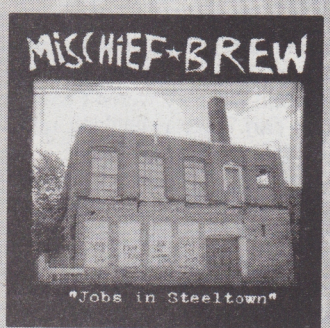


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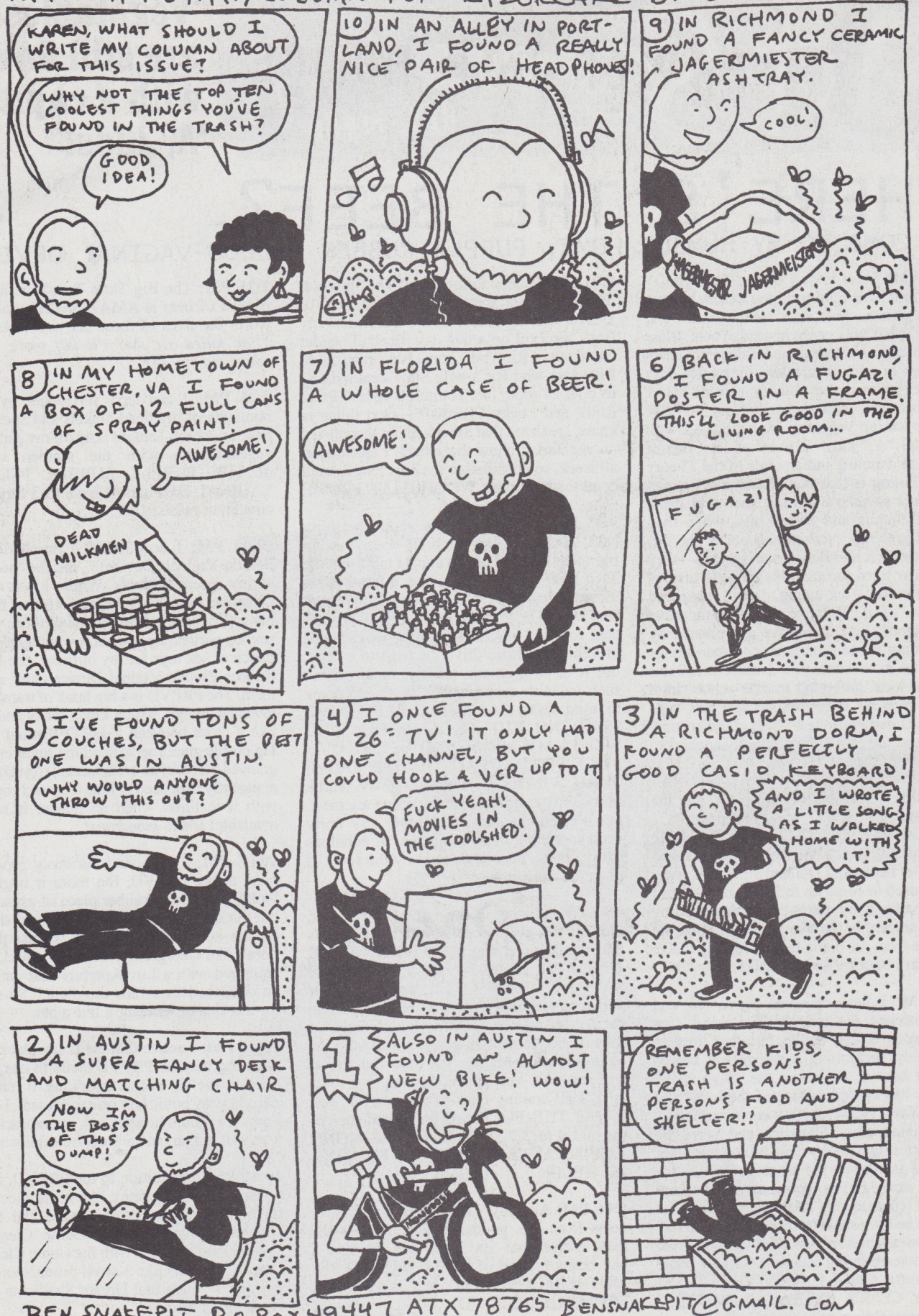




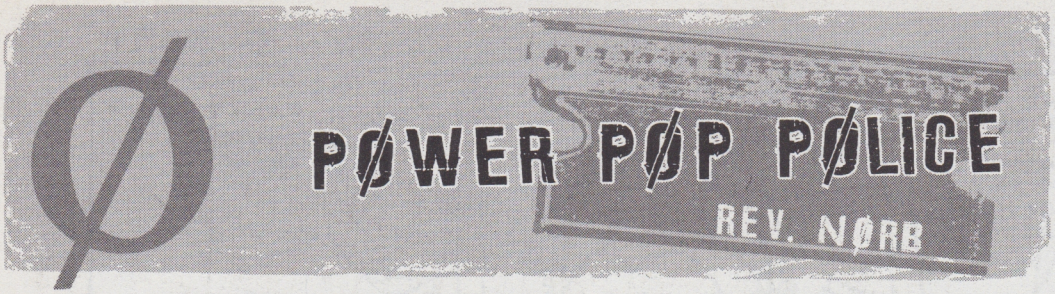
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"Vegetables are still GAY with a capital 'A,' kids!"

WHERE'S THE BEEF? or

WELCOME TO MY HUMBLE HOME, PURPLE RUBBER PSEUDO-VAGINAL DEVICE

8:50 PM: I am sitting in the Taco Bell™ drive-thru lane. I am ordering a bean burrito, minus onions, plus sour cream, and a Big Taste Taco®, with beans instead of beef. Bless me Father, for i have sinned: I have not eaten the flesh of a fellow creature for twelve days now. Drink in the terrible majesty of THAT great betrayal, punk rockers!! Now, do NOT get me wrong: Vegetables are still GAY with a capital "A," kids! In point of fact, one of the most damning indictments of the Theory of Evolution is that our inbred antediluvian ancestors somehow did not keel over dead, full of fungus and pokey bits, when they started grabbing random shit out of the dirt and shoving it into their festering yaps—they somehow lived through this pathetic display of unbridled ick-eating, and prospered because of it. Why, if some neanderthal Alley-Oop® type can thrive and prosper by consuming random orange and green things he found in the dirt, you'd think it follows that the local gibbering middle school idiot who shaves his eyebrows off and eats bugs and discarded Popsicle® sticks could become President! Oh...wait. That actually appears to be the case. You go, Darwin.

8:55 PM: I have placed my order, and the guy says it's $2.72. Now, goddammit, i may not know EXACTLY what i'm doing ordering my Big Taste Taco® with beans instead of beef, but i DO know that this order is supposed to come up to $2.42, not $2.72. I figure perhaps my currency has devalued by eleven percent in the five minutes it took me to move from the menu to the ordering place. I wouldn't be surprised, actually.

8:58 PM: I have received my order, and have checked the receipt. The thirty cent discrepancy is due to the fact that, instead of politely performing a straight up beans-for-beef hostage exchange, the yo-yo at the window has instead subtracted the beef from my Big Taste Taco®, as if it were some manner of unwanted, onion-like yuck, and added the beans as an extra luxury item, billing me three-tenths of a dollar for the privilege. So. Let me get this straight: The restaurant gets to keep the beef ((presumably relatively costly)), and give me beans instead ((presumably relatively inexpensive, unless my decades-long dream of a fart-powered flying saucer has finally come to fruition)), AND I HAVE TO PAY THEM THIRTY CENTS EXTRA TO DO THIS? Man, vegetarians are SO gay. So gay.

9:01 PM: I blame former Boris The Sprinkler bassist Ric Six for this whole sad state of affairs. Me, him, and Drew from the Jetty Boys went off on a five day baseball bender based out of Ric's new home base in puzzling Delaware, and Ric's wife Stevi kept making us piles of food, like Totino's® cheese Pizza Rolls, and Lucky Charms™—next thing ya know, i realized that Stevi kept us so well-fed on vegetarian chow that i hadn't eaten meat all week, so i decided to see how long i could continue the streak. WHOO!!! LENT 24/7!!!

9:03 PM: I'm still fuming about the thirty cent surcharge. By jingo, it doesn't seem right that i should be paying for meat that the Taco Bell™ dude is just, like, putting in his metaphorical pocket or whatever; my errant beef should be given to me in a small Dixie® cup, so that i may flick it at the windshields of vehicles whose drivers i wish to offend, use it in an aromatic toiletry, or any other such valuable repurposings as should come to mind. GOD DAMMIT, THERE'S SOME STARVING KID IN CAMBODIA WHO WANTS MY MEAT, AND MY MEAT IS STILL SITTING BACK AT THE DRIVE THRU WINDOW! What a screwy world. Some little emaciated fellow wants my meat, and i'm paying the Taco Bell® guy thirty cents to keep it in some manner of nebulous Meat Limbo, accessible only by the souls of phantom beef. Bah.

9:05 PM: Musing on the matter a bit further, did you ever get one of those junk mail letters that states something to the effect of "FOR JUST FIVE CENTS A DAY, YOU CAN SAVE A CHILD'S LIFE!", and the sender apparently thinks you're a bit unclear on the denominations of American coinage, so they rubber cement an actual nickel onto the letter—presumably so you see the nickel and say "Ah, yes! THAT'S what five cents is! It's all coming back to me now!"? Well WHAT THE FUCK are they sending ME the nickel for??? SEND IT TO THE DYING KID!!! I ALREADY HAVE A FUCKING NICKEL!!!

9:06 PM: Actually, i don't. I'm down thirty cents from this goddamn taco. I guess the math states that six kids died because i had beans instead of beef. I WASTED SIX MOTHERFUCKERS ON MY WAY BACK FROM THE BELL, YO!

9:25 PM: The Big Taste Taco® with beans instead of beef is AMAZINGLY good. It is worth the lives of those six underclassmen. *"I've killed six, but i'll kill more, beans command my .44!"*

9:46 PM: I can tarry no longer over the remnants of my dead nickels and spent Fire Sauce packets. Tonight i cap off my genocidal vegetarianism with the maiden voyage of...THE PURPLE RUBBER PSEUDO-VAGINAL DEVICE ((i have to; i forgot the cinnamon twists))!!!

10:00 PM: I acquired The Purple Rubber Pseudo-Vaginal Device™ on the occasion of my recent birthday. Whilst i was out in Delaware, having my morals corrupted by Ric, my girlfriend was hosting one of those wacky sex toy parties. As a result, i wound up with a bunch of sex toys for my birthday; the Purple Rubber Pseudo-Vaginal Device chief among them. The PRPVD is a big hunk of translucent lavender rubber, which kinda looks and feels like a cross between a Jell-O™ mold and a big purple gumdrop with all the sugar crystals gnawed off ((but no teeth marks)) ((yet)). I am apparently supposed to lube it up and copulate with it in times when no human is readily available. *Mmm, gumdrops!*

10:05 PM: The more i curiously prod and poke at the PRPVD, the more it begins to look like a purple rubber piece of asparagus, but thicker on the x- and y-axes, and shorter on the z-axis. The top part is unsettlingly floral, like Georgia O'Keeffe on a stick. It is equipped with a Luv Aperture that can best be described as a "she-dinghole." So much for the idea of wearing it like a hat.

10:07 PM: I notice that the fancy black fake satin bag that the PRPVD came in has left a fiber on the top of the asparagus. It reminds me of a stray pubic hair on a toilet seat. I don't know if i should be appalled, or embrace it as a sign of humanistic anthropomorphism.

10:10 PM: In addition to the PRPVD, i also got some ancillary items, like white chocolate flavored edible massage cream, and some spooge-remover entitled "Come Clean®." I'm not sure i'm cool with the Come Clean®. I mean, it seems like a swell product and all, but now i've got that Dream Syndicate song stuck in my head.

give me beans instead, (presumably relatively inexpensive),

unless my decades-long dream of a fart-powered flying saucer has finally come to fruition.



RYAN GELATIN

10:15 PM: It is obvious that the PRPVD was designed by a female. Not because it bears any manner of striking anatomical resemblance to The Real Deal (it doesn't), but because no guy would have designed such an item without a way to open up the front end of the device and run water through it after we're done. Come Clean® or no, the only way to rinse this thing out is through the dinghole, which, i imagine, means i'm gonna hafta stretch the dinghole over the faucet, blast water down into it, and then have some resultant geyser of white chocolate massage lotion, Come Clean®, tap water, and Manly Goodness® blasting out all over the sink. Great. Can't wait.

10:22 PM: I go get the various lubes and haul them into the living room. I think if you got more than two handfuls of weird sex products at your house at any one time, you got kind of a problem. Not only do i have white chocolate flavored edible massage cream, but i also have some kind of strawberry-flavored quasi-AstroGlide® shit as well. Hey, i don't buy the stuff, i just usually pay for it. I hate the strawberry stuff. Partly because the slipperiness wears off on any high-friction area after about two minutes. Partly because the low-friction areas stay slimy all night. Mostly because it costs about fifteen bucks a bottle.

10:27 PM: I decide fuck it, and go get the completely inedible, non-flavored, no-name hand lotion. As one might assume, i have scant interest in consuming any of the bi-products of this session.

10:30 PM: I figure out why girls always get you scented lubes: They want to be able to bust you for masturbating by the sense of smell alone.

10:38 PM: I cue up the porn, but am having second thoughts about using the hand lotion. What if there's some unforeseen, horrible chemical reaction that results, and breaks down the molecular integrity of my PRPVD? What if this is some known issue that i will be mocked, shunned, and derided for not being aware of? Being entrusted with the care and preservation of a PRPVD is the post-adolescent equivalent of owning a Red Ryder® BB gun!!!

10:45 PM: This is so fucking exciting i fall asleep for an hour.

11:45 PM: I awake, and decide THE TIME HAS COME. I opt for the strawberry stuff, as it's the least viscous, therefore least likely to contribute to the "PRPVD Full O' Goo" problem i anticipate at this caper's conclusion.

11:46 PM: I attempt to engage the PRPVD. I am repelled by the overly taut dinghole.

11:50 PM: I attempt to engage the PRPVD again, after some preparatory, non-PRPVD work on my part. Things are fruitlessly flipping and flopping this way and that. Much wrangling ensues.

11:55 PM: I am, after great struggle, wearing the PRPVD upon my member like a hideously mutated condom the size of a telephone pole insulator. The strawberry slime has already failed me, and i've moved on to the chocolate. I pummel and twist and attempt to effect some manner of sexual nirvana. All i can really think about is making those blend-your-own chocolate shakes at Kwik Trip™. I abandon pretense and grab the hand lotion.

MIDNIGHT: He shoots! He scores!

12:02 AM: I part ways with the PRPVD. The Come Clean® actually works surprisingly well. My crotch smells like a bakery.

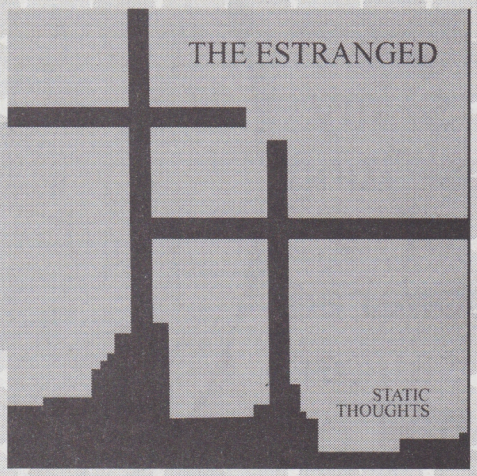
12:05 AM: I crawl into bed, and contemplate sending the edible chocolate massage cream to a starving Cambodian kid, with my compliments.

Love,
Nørb

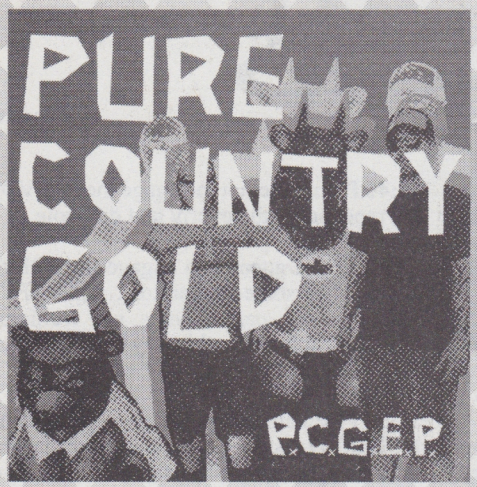
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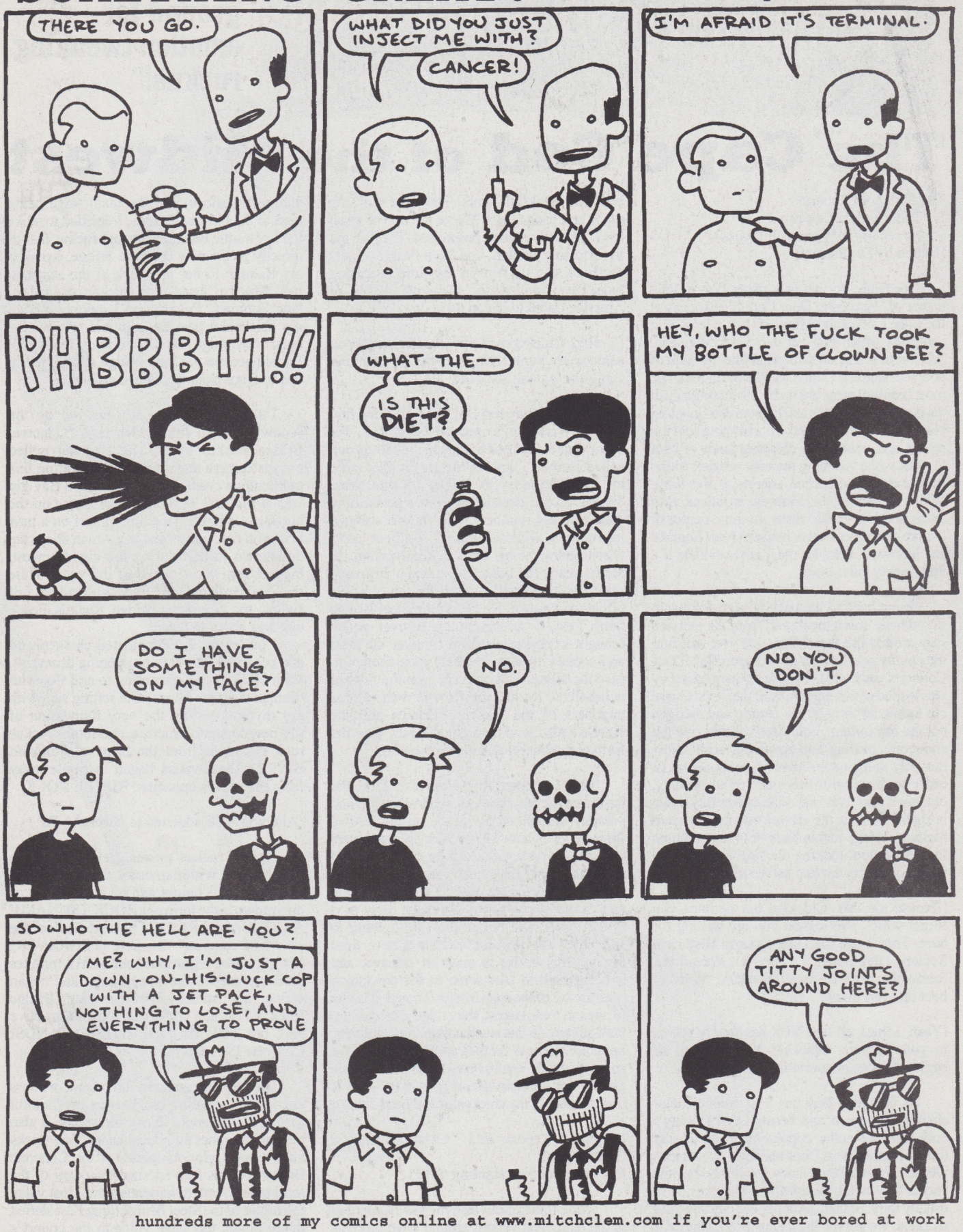
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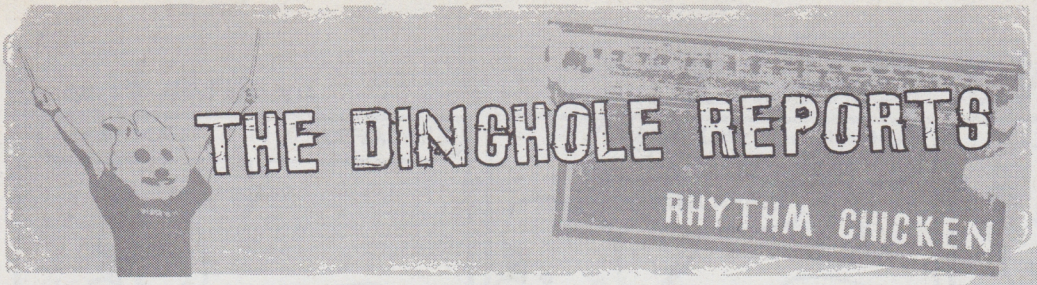
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"I smelled fertile ground for emotion-tweaking ruckus!"

The Cape Cod of the Midwest

The Dinghole Reports
By The Rhythm Chicken
(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

I certainly do live in a rather bizarre little corner of Wisconsin. Door County is known as the Cape Cod of the Midwest. It is a long, thin peninsula which juts out into Lake Michigan. Wisconsin is shaped somewhat like the back of your left hand and Door County is the thumb. The most beautiful areas are up by the thumbnail, all the quaint small towns and harbors with looming bluffs and cliffs overhead. Tourists pour into the resorts and restaurants, dropping loads of cash to relax while watching majestic sunrises to the East and color-drenched sunsets to the West. While the rest of the Midwest is littered with farms and blue-collar cities, my little corner of it more resembles a cross between New England and Norway. Lucky for me, Lambeau Field is a mere ninety miles away.

Going back to the back of your left hand, if you head down the thumb from the nail and stop around the thumb knuckle you will find the county seat known as Sturgeon Bay, Door County's only city. This once-gorgeous bay was loaded with sturgeon, until the Coast Guard cut a channel through the county and dredged out the bay bottom, completely destroying the sturgeon's nesting and spawning areas. Now the only sturgeon in town is in its name. In order to drive up to my neck of the county, one must pass over one of Sturgeon Bay's two bridges. There's the newer tall and modern highway bridge just outside of town, and then there's the cool-looking old steel beam bridge which connects the two halves of downtown.

[Excuse me, Mr. Chicken, but perhaps you forgot which publication you are writing for here. This is not the Door County Historical Society newsletter. This is *Razorcake*. Remember? Punk rock? Ruckus? Piles of beer and fart jokes? - Dr. S.]

(Yeah, I think all that NPR has finally gotten to you. Jeepers, Chicken! You're goin' all egghead on us or something? – F.F.)

So, Sturgeon Bay has long been a major shipbuilding town and boasts Door County's only real blue-collar population. They usually think of us northern Door residents as rich kids whose parents all own fancy resorts and buy the yachts they build. We northern Door residents usually think of them as shifty big city shipyard workers. We got the log cabins and quaint little bed and breakfast joints. They got the strip malls and back alleys. We've got all the small town privately owned businesses. They've got McDonalds, Subway, and Taco Bell. I usually prefer to stay up here in my little imaginary hideaway wonderland, the only sliver of America I wish to live in these days.

[Really, Chickenman, this better be going somewhere punk rock, and it better be going somewhere punk rock fast. – Dr. S.]

Well, in Sturgeon Bay you will also find one of Wisconsin's musical celebrities, Pat MacDonald. Pat used to play in the '80s group called Timbuk 3, known mostly for their radio hit "My Future's So Bright I Gotta Wear Shades." Now, decades later, he's performing darker bluesy numbers with various stringed instruments while stomping his boot on a wired board for his own rhythm section. In recent years, Pat has spearheaded a project to raise awareness and support for the old steel bridge downtown. He began the Steel Bridge Song Fest, a weekend-long festival which brought in musicians from all over the state and country to play and help raise money to save the ailing bridge. Every year the festival is headlined by Jackson Brown, with various members of the Violent Femmes and the Go-Go's also lending a hand. Every year the festival gets larger and more renowned.

Since I returned from Poland in 2006, Pat has asked the Rhythm Chicken to show up and possibly unleash some ruckus on the festival for three years now. My two previous summers were far too busy with work for me to entertain such folly, and I never really saw the big name rock fest as my gig anyway. This year, however, there's been a slight turn of events. Right next to the aging steel bridge they are fighting to save, they are also constructing a new, third bridge. This bridge is made of concrete and is being built to take some of the downtown pressure off of the steel bridge. Though it is due to open in mid-August, the bridge is essentially built already. In this small community, differing opinions on these bridges are strong and have sparked much controversy. I smelled fertile ground for emotion-tweaking ruckus! It was time to load up the chickenkit and head south.

Dinghole Report #95: Concrete Bridge Ruckus Fest!
(Rhythm Chicken sighting #417)

While most of the festival was happening in the many fest venues around town (taverns and coffee shops) and the main stage being next to the old steel bridge, I decided to stoke the fire a little bit and bring my ruckus flames directly to the new concrete bridge. I parked my Rooster Roller just back of the sign that read "Bridge Closed." My chicken roadie, Dan "the Eggman" Eggert, and I quickly carried my chickenkit past the sign and up near the open drawbridge end of the bridge. To my left, I could see the old steel bridge silhouetted in one of Door County's famed sunsets.

I set up my aging kit and put up the sandwich board sign which read "Concrete Bridge Ruckus Fest." The Eggman pulled out his camera and started documenting this momentous event. My last Sturgeon Bay gig was at the base of a huge deer statue on the outskirts of town. This time, I was on a new bridge in the heart of the bay which slices the downtown in half during the city's newest, biggest festival weekend of the year. While the Steel Bridge Song Fest was already in full swing, the Concrete Bridge Ruckus Fest's egg was about to hatch!

I pulled on the dilapidated chickenhead and began my thunderous opening drum roll. With chicken ears slamming to and fro, with drumsticks mere blurs in the setting sun, with my rhythms testing the very foundation of this new concrete structure, my riotous ruckus rock emanated from the heart of Sturgeon Bay! The bay waters began to ripple away from the ruckus epicenter. RIPPLE ROCK!

(And you ARE addicted to cheese! – F.F.)

As my ruckus power grew, so did the rock ripples! Within minutes, they had grown to a dangerous height and hit both shores of downtown in the form of a ROCK TSUNAMI! A GODDAMN ROCK TSUNAMI! Feel the power of concrete! Concrete is FOREVER! My gig lasted a glorious four or five minutes until my snare head ripped open and began eating my sticks. The Concrete Bridge Ruckus Fest had come to a most destructive end, but THE BRIDGE STILL STANDS! Concrete IS forever!

The only real audience member to witness this bridge-honoring ruckus was my faithful roadie, the Eggman. Lucky for me, he is also the photographer for a local paper. Two weeks later, a most glorious photo of the Concrete Bridge Ruckus Fest adorned the cover of the local paper's entertainment section. Just when the fervor of the Steel Bridge Song Fest started dying down, this gave voice to the county's



DAN "THE EGGMAN" EGGERT

Feel the power of concrete! Concrete is FOREVER!

pro-concrete bridge population. Meanwhile, the bridge wars rage on down south and I am back up in the county's thumbnail, waging war on the mice and earwigs in my trashy northwoods trailer.

[Okay, Rhythm Chicken. I will have to admit that was somewhat punk rock, stoking the flames in the thumb-knuckle bridge wars, and somehow wrangling an Evaporators reference in there. This cluck's for you. – Dr. S.]

(Wait one minute. I can't believe I'm going to ask this, but isn't summer your most celebrated "parade season"? Haven't you been rolling your ruckus through the small town festivals like usual? – F.F.)

Well, now that you asked…

Dinghole Report #96: July 4th Parade Ruckus…..and BOOBIES!!!
(Rhythm Chicken sighting #420)

It was the morning of the Fourth of July. I had loaded up my chickenkit into my friend Fuzzy's truck and started decorating the float with signs and empty Hamm's cans (emptying each one, personally, beforehand). This parade in the small town of Baileys Harbor is Door County's largest of the year. Even WDOR, the local radio station, gives a very detailed live report of the parade on air, which I still find most amusing. I had duct taped all my quirky posterboard signs all around Fuzzy's truck. *Rhythm Chicken Roller Ruckus! Poultry Gone Bad! Roller Derby Is Cooler than Capitalism!* Then I found a stack of old *Playboy* magazines in my trunk which I found at the dump a month ago and a smile crossed my beak.

I took two of the covers and taped them on the back of the float, a blatant display of perverse tom-foolery! I kept another two copies on the float with me. Before long, the parade was in full swing and I was once again pounding out my locally acclaimed fun rock! The crowds just ate it up and yelled for more. The hot July sun beat down on me as I beat down harder on my chickenskins! Every year the crowds grow louder and more and more beer and cocktails get carried up to the float. Punk rock! No one paid much attention to the little Playboy displays on my tailgate.

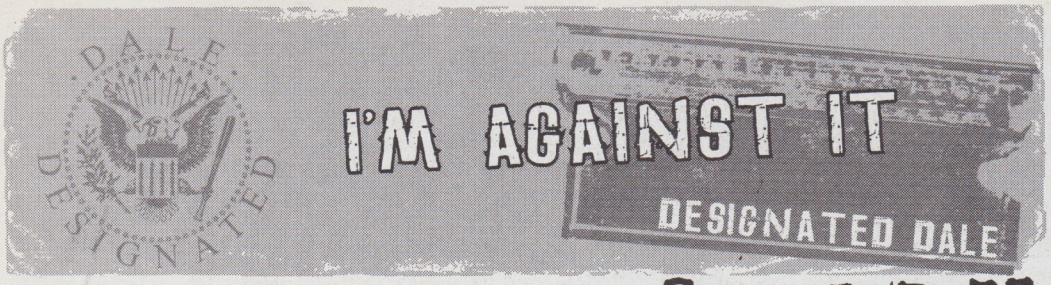
Then we neared the largest crowd just outside the Blue Ox Saloon, where the WDOR radio announcers were once again rambling on about my dirty chickenhead and "signature move" (wings gloriously raised skyward). When my wings went up, the crowd roared like never before! I reached behind me and pulled out a nudie mag. I held it up sideways and the centerfold fell out and hung down in a manner for me to view its nakedness. You could hear all the guys in the audience holler, "WHOOOOOAH!!!!" Then I heard one woman's voice cry out, "There's CHILDREN here!" I quickly tossed the rag behind me and commenced with my time-honored chicken rock. The parade rolled on.

Later that afternoon, Fuzzy called me at work and let me know the news. Apparently, the Rhythm Chicken float won fourth place in the float competition and a cash prize of $300! The bad news is that he was stripped of his award (and birdseed money) after too many mothers complained that he was displaying INAPPROPRIATE MATERIAL on his float! So there you have it. Wholesome small town warmly embraces wild punk rock chicken drummer, hell bent on lunacy, but cannot handle his displaying of a classic American periodical.

(Jeepers, Chicken! What a load of HOOSH-WASH! – F.F.)

[Yeah, so when's the next roadsit? – Dr. S.]

–Rhythm Chicken
rhythmchicken@hotmail.com



"Because a DUI is about as much fun as a Michael Bolton concert (including his metal years)."

We Can't Win!

(Part 1 of 2)

Coppers.
Johnny Law.
Heat.
Fuzz.
The Man.
Narcs.
Pigs.
Cops.
Men in Blue.
5-0.
The Po-Po.

We've all adapted our favorite slang for those on the police force at one time or another and the names are not usually in the most favorable light. I mean, let's be honest here, the nicknames would probably have a lot more positive glow if the majority of cops who've pulled us over and/or approached us wouldn't cross the line so often. I'm not saying that a police officer should approach each and every person with a shit-eating grin across their face, with flowers in hand, dancing a lil' jig, but they should reciprocate a little more common courtesy when they see the person they're dealing with is not agitating the situation or looking for trouble. The "treat others how you'd like to be treated" syndrome, right?

Now, I'll be the first to say that an officer's job isn't a walk in the park, 'cause I couldn't even imagine. Responding on a call to a domestic disturbance and having to restrain yourself from breaking a foot off in some creep's ass due to his woman-abusing tendencies wouldn't be the easiest thing to do (not in my book, anyway). Remember Officer Bud White in that fantastic film, *L.A. Confedential?* I think my knee jerk reaction to arriving on the scene for female abuse would be his reaction to a T. How about repeatedly answering to calls to question and possibly take in a suspect who's clearly involved in some kind of theft, assault, or other douchebaggery? Definitely not a county fair cakewalk of any kind. The same goes for routine stops in traffic when drivers pulled over are trying to talk (or stupidly argue) their way out of a speeding ticket that they totally know they deserve (like doing sixty in a thirty-five MPH zone). Yes, it'd get old. And then there are the questionable drunk drivers who the police and highway patrol officers have to deal with on a daily basis. This especially would get old real quick, but logical thinking dictates that any officer would appreciate the small percentage of people they're dealing with in this situation who have nothing to hide and are 100% compliant.

But no, that's too easy.

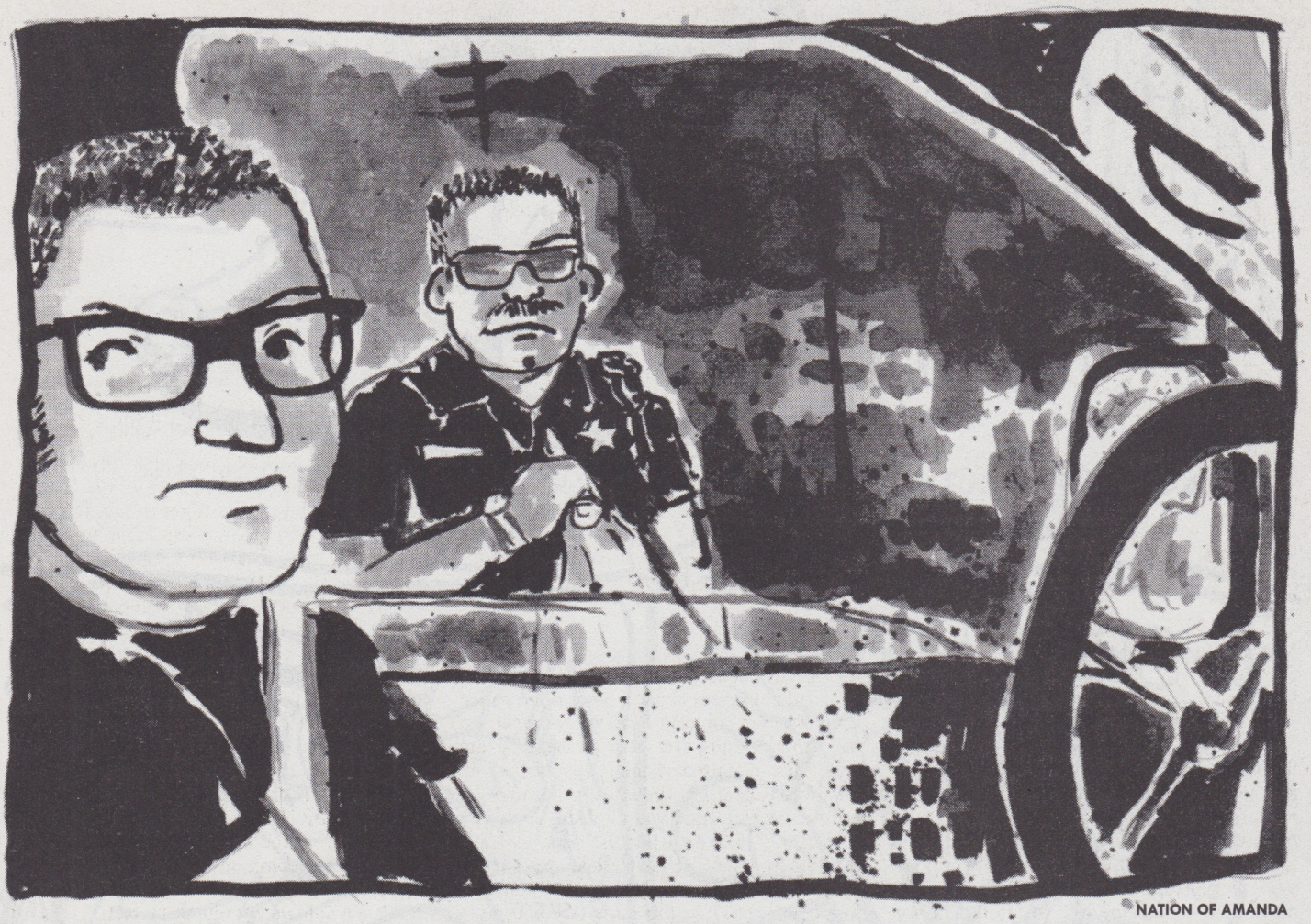
Always being the sober one of the bunch (no, I'm not straight edge), I was often called upon to commandeer whoever's vehicle to and from the gig we were all heading out to. When I started gigging regularly with my own bands, I automatically became the constant driver, and I was (and still am) more than happy to drive when the situation calls for it. Why? Because a DUI is about as much fun as a Michael Bolton concert (including his metal years) on the same day you get a double root canal from an oral surgeon who doesn't believe in painkillers. No thank you.

Some years back, around 1995, I was driving a couple of my very inebriated (and über fun loving) friends home after a gig one evening: Martin McMartin (*Flipside* staffer and RAFR Records kingpin) and Bill Burks (Humpers lead guitarist extraordinaire). While driving through Hollywood to get back on the freeway towards Martin's house, Bill yelled out gleefully from the back seat, "You're not Dale anymore! You're Designated Dale, the golden ticket!" Everyone in the car, including myself, started laughing, when Martin turned to me and says, "I think you just got your new *Flipside* name," being that I was just about to start writing for *Flipside* in the upcoming issue (thanks to brother man Todd Taylor, who was co-editing at the time). And so it stuck years later to this day.

Anyone who's been in a band knows damn well that when you're hauling gear to or from a show, it immediately throws a red flag up for most cops' suspicion, no matter how by-the-DMV-handbook you're driving that truck or van. In their eyes, band gear plus "them crazy punk rockers" MUST equal, at the very least, some drinking and driving going on, not to mention whatever else they can muster up for "probable cause." Again, not every single black and white has pulled us over going to and from a gig, but I'll be damned if it didn't happen more than usual, especially heading back in the wee hours of the morning after a night of sweaty, cut-loose rock'n'roll. Now, I can relate to where a cop's coming from—it's after hours, the bars have shut down, and here's a truck full of creeps loaded down with gear heading back to god-knows-where. Yeah, there's a fairly good chance that the person who's had the least to sip is behind the wheel, and even though they're perfectly fine to drive, they may be legally drunk and are subject to getting busted upon being tested. Let's make it clear that I'm not here to discriminate against those who can or can't handle their shit when driving. If you know you're fucked up or are dangerously close to failing a sobriety test, common sense should prevail. Everyone's different, as are their limits, but that's a whole other column in itself.

What I don't like (actually I *really* fucking resent) is when people like me get pulled over by Officer Ham Hock, and then piggy decides to start picking at my brains, even though I've been completely cooperative and proven sober. The following scenario went down in Santa Barbara after one of our shows a couple of years ago. This cop started in on me with his chicken-shit trickery of attempting to make me contradict myself *AFTER* he performed the standard eye test on me for bouncing pupils with no such luck. I was obviously in the clear, but he wasn't having it. Also keep in mind that I had a soused Mark and snockered Torrez up front in the cab with me, and a floundering, drunken Pensacola Bob in the back of my truck, nestled down underneath all our gear, mumbling something loudly to the likes of "*Fuck! Let's go to Jack in the Box*!"

Cop (putting his eye test penlight back in his shirt pocket)**:** So, Dale, how many drinks did you say you had tonight?
Me: I told you when you first pulled me over, I don't drink at all.
Mark: C'mon, man, don't sweat Crazy (Mark's given nickname to me), he's a good kid.
Cop (really mad that Mark's soused but can't do a damn thing about it)**:**I wasn't talking to you. Dale, where did you say you all were coming back from?



NATION OF AMANDA

I'd be more than happy to grab the closest bottle I can find right now and give you a urine sample.

Me: The Creekside Inn in Goleta. I told you we had a show there tonight.
Cop: And you say you don't live up around here?
Me: No, like I told you when you first pulled us over, I live in L.A.
Cop: And how many drinks did you have at the show in Goleta tonight?
Me: Again, I don't drink at all.
Pensacola Bob (grunting loudly from the back of my truck, underneath a drop cloth)**:** Come on, seriously, he doesn't drink at all! Look at him and look at us!

The snockered Torrez looked over at the distraught cop with a hysterical grimace on his face and shrugged. I almost started laughing out loud.

Cop: So you don't drink at all? Why are your eyes so red?
Me: Because I've been up for almost twenty-four hours. I start work at three in the morning and right now it's pushing almost three in the morning Saturday.
Cop: And you work up here?
Me: I told you I live in L.A.
Cop: And how much did you have to drink before you started back to Santa Barbara tonight?
Me (getting fed up)**:** Listen, with all due respect, I know you're just trying to do your job out here, and I know it ain't easy. You must pull over all kinds of lushes on the weekends, especially with the college nearby. But you performed the eye test and said yourself that my pupils are normal, and now you're continuing to ask how much I had to drink with every other question. I'd be more than happy to blow into a breathalyzer, draw up my own blood sample, or grab the closest bottle I can find right now and give you a urine sample. I *do not* drink. I have *nothing* to hide. All I want is to do is grab some food and knock out at this guy's (pointing to Mark) place.
Pensacola Bob (from the back again)**:** *JACK IN THE BOX!*
Cop (completely annoyed at the whole scene)**:** There's no need to get so defensive, Dale. You need to relax! All I was asking was routine questions of your whereabouts tonight, so make sure you get these guys straight home!

I don't have to get so defensive? After you asked me the same question over a dozen times in less than five minutes because you have nothing else better to do than harass some tired schlub who's been NOTHING BUT ON THE LEVEL WITH YOU?! And the worst part is you *know* that I was being nothing but honest, but you're gonna act like a pig dick anyway. Man, *fuck* you and the rest of your power trip kind that have no appreciation of people like me who go out of their way so that their wasted homies stay off the road. This is just one of the reasons why I don't trust most cops.

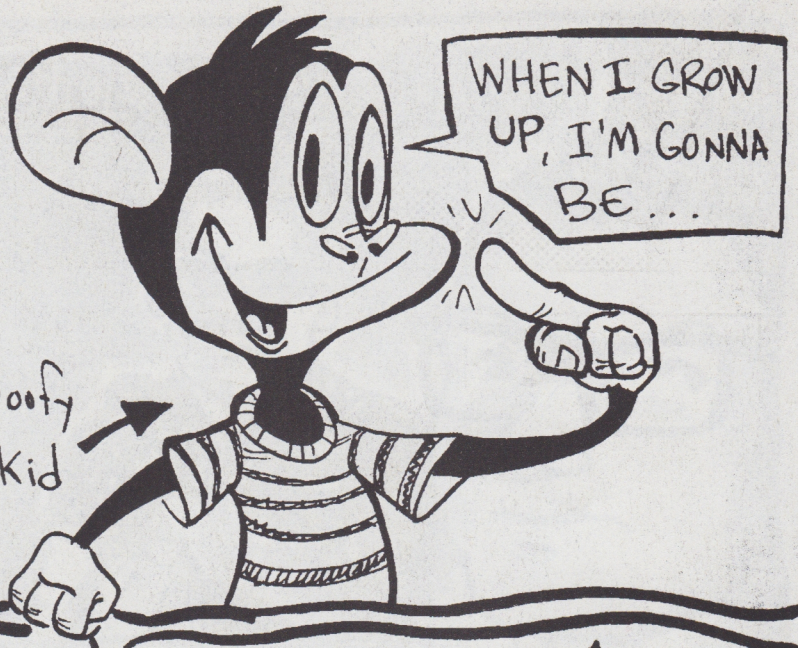
Part 2 continued next issue…

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–Designated Dale
designateddale@yahoo.com

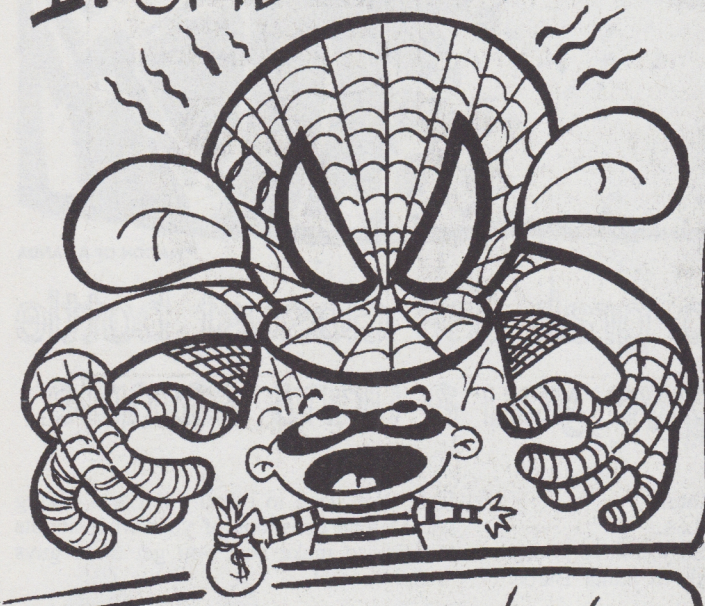
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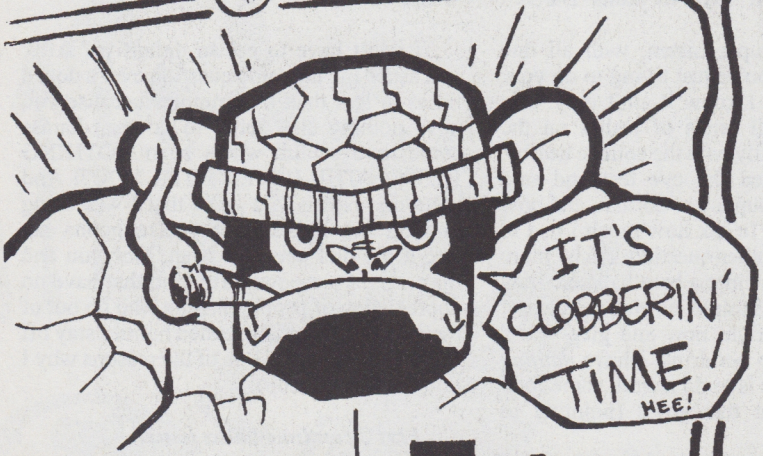


1. SPIDERMAN





2. YOGI BEAR



3. THE THING



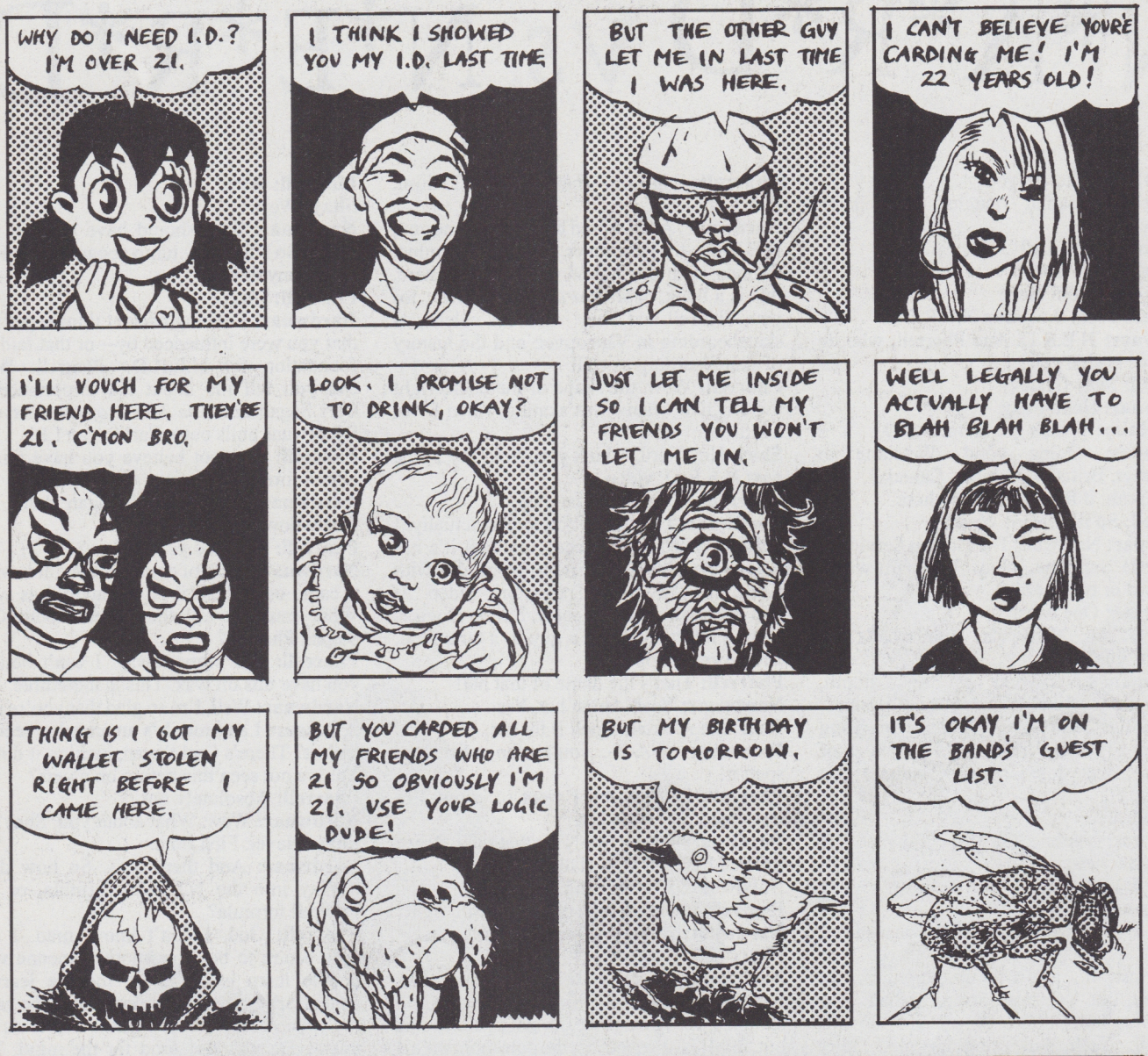
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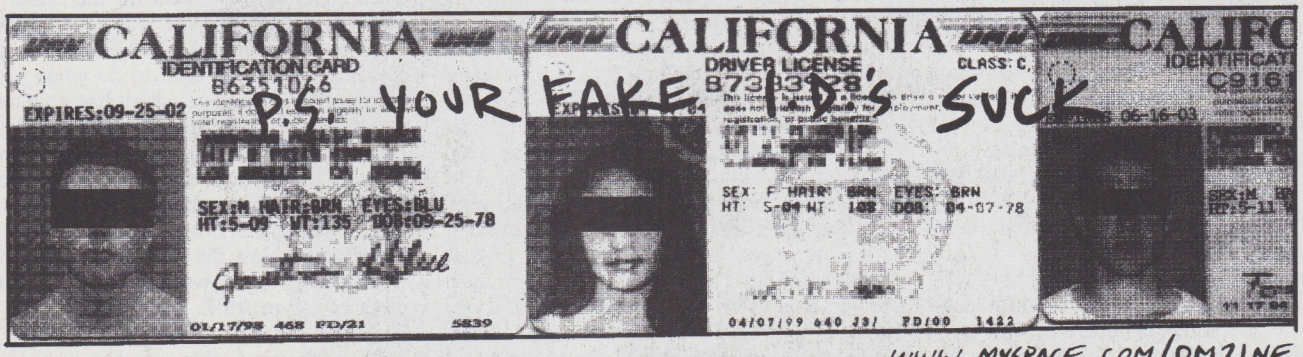
...AND I LOOK LIKE BLUTO.

won ton not now

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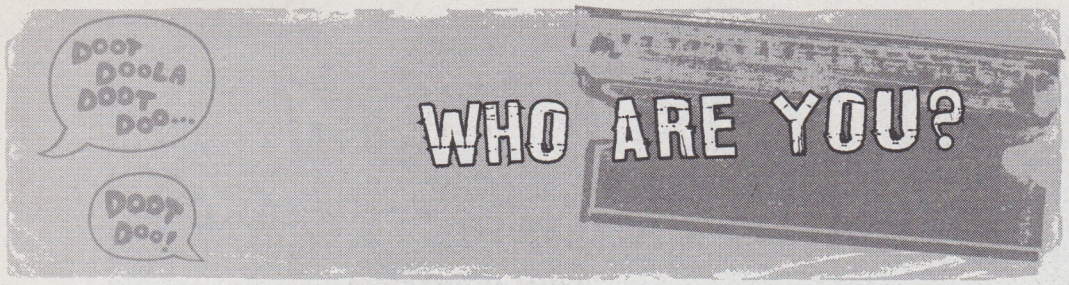
BY KIYOSHI NAKAZAWA





PS YOUR FAKE I.D.'S SUCK

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"Pharrell: Ho-ly shit. Shay: [laughs]"

N*A*R*D vs. N*E*R*D

Nardwuar: Who are you?
Pharrell Williams: [laughs] I'm check-check-check.
Nardwuar: You are?
Pharrell: I'm Pharrell.
Nardwuar: From the?
Pharrell: From the group N.E.R.D.
Nardwuar: N.E.R.D. And Pharrell, who do you have beside you?
Pharrell: Shay [Haley].
Nardwuar: Hello Shay.
Shay Haley: What's going on, Nard?
Nardwuar: Doing good. Welcome to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.
Shay: Yeah, it feels good to be here.
Pharrell: So it's "Nard Wuar?"
Nardwuar: Nardwuar The Human Serviette.
Pharrell: Serviette, okay. Is "Nard-wuar" one word or two words?
Nardwuar: One word.
Pharrell: Ah, Nardwuar. And what's the origin of this?
Nardwuar: "Nardwuar" is like a dumb, stupid name, like Sting. And "Human" is from the band The Cramps, their song "Human Fly." And in the United States of America, you don't have serviettes, you have nap…
Pharrell: Uh…
Nardwuar: Napkins. So I'm Nardwuar The Human Serviette.
Pharrell: Oh, so the human napkin?
Nardwuar: Yes, exactly.
Pharrell: But what does Nardwuar mean, though?
Nardwuar: It's just a dumb, stupid, made-up name, like Sebadoh, Sting, Sinbad. You know what I mean?
Pharrell: Yeah, but Sting has real, like, there's a definition for it. Is there a definition for it?
Nardwuar: Well, no, there isn't. Although there is a record label recently that sprung up called Jagjaguwar. And I was really kind of jealous of that, thinking they're stealing my shtick there, calling the record label that. But no, it's just a dumb, stupid name.
Pharrell: Really, so there is no dictionary definition?
Nardwuar: No, I was just talking to myself one day, groveling, going Nard-Nard-Nard-Nardwuar! It's kind of nerdy, isn't it? In a way, N.E.R.D. Nardwuar! We both share N's together. Sorry for not acknowledging that.
Pharrell: No, no, that's great. I think that's cool.
Nardwuar: And I would like to welcome you, N.E.R.D., to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, with a gift. And we have right here, this is a book, *Skateboarding Vancouver*, for you, Pharrell and Shay. And this celebrates skateboarding in Vancouver, and the history of skateboarding as well.
Pharrell: Wow, the shape of the board right there is like when I was skating, when I was a kid.
Shay: Hey Nard, I think you should be in the next N.E.R.D. video.
Pharrell: Absolutely. [laughs]
Nardwuar: I'm there. You know, actually, I make a weird appearance, although it's not me, in the video that Snoop Dogg did with Korn, the "Twisted Transistor" video. If you watch the video closely, Snoop Dogg is getting interviewed by a guy in a tartan hat, and he gets slapped.
Pharrell: That's the name of that hat!
Nardwuar: Yeah, tartan hat. Yes.
Pharrell: A tartan. Spell it for me.
Nardwuar: T-A-R-...you're the artist, you spell it!
Pharrell: No, no, no, I want to know. I'm interested. I like the hat.
Nardwuar: T-A-R-T-A-N? Is that right, Shay?
Shay: I have no idea. [laughs]
Nardwuar: Anyway, in that video…
Pharrell: It's English in nature though, right?
Nardwuar: Actually, from Scotland.
Pharrell: Oh.
Nardwuar: It is quite an amazing hat. Something maybe Billionaire Boys Club should actually examine. Because, check this out, this [Nardwuar takes the pom-pom off his hat] comes off here and you can put it on here [Nardwuar attaches the pom-pom to the beak of his hat], so you can do this, if you want. And, actually, I did see one of the *Sex and the City* characters wearing this years ago, so I may have actually influenced them as well. But I would like to welcome you guys to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, with the book on skateboarding British Columbia. And back, yes, to the Korn video. In that Korn video for "Twisted Transistor" you see Snoop Dogg slap the reporter, and it's a guy wearing a tartan hat. And I later asked Snoop Dogg, and he said the character was inspired by me.
Pharrell: Wow.
Shay: Wow.
Nardwuar: So I should have been in that video. So I'll gladly jump aboard a N.E.R.D. video, any day.
Pharrell: Okay.
Nardwuar: Looking back at things, perhaps that you were influenced by—or that laid the foundation for N.E.R.D.—Pharrell. What can you tell me about the importance of Carl Sagan and *The Music of the Cosmos*? [Nardwuar pulls out a Carl Sagan LP]
Pharrell: I cannot believe you have this in album form.
Nardwuar: This is Carl Sagan doing the throw-down.
Pharrell: How did you… How?
Nardwuar: Well, of course, I bought it when it came out. There it is. A gatefold as well. What can you tell the people about Carl Sagan, Pharrell?
Pharrell: I'm blown away. I can't believe you have this on wax. This is incredible.
Nardwuar: Well, I'm so glad that you're into it, because I am, too. It's an amazing record, isn't it? There's Carl Sagan, kicking it down. You've not seen this before on a wax?
Pharrell: Absolutely not.
Nardwuar: Wow. What about you, Shay?
Shay: Never. First time.
Nardwuar: And there it is. So how does it play into the N.E.R.D. formula, or the Pharrell formula?
Pharrell: God, I don't know, man. I can only aspire to be, you know, someone who people learn as much as they've learned from Carl Sagan. Carl Sagan is… he is to me what A Tribe Called Quest was to us for music. He was just food for the mind. The way he thought and the way he articulated. And he had a special talent for teaching the layman. And that's hard to do when you're talking about science, which has a tendency to be technical, mostly, all the time. He just has a way of teaching and articulating to the layman, like myself. 'Cause, in school I really didn't care about science. It was so boring. But to watch this, I have the DVD set.
Nardwuar: Now the vinyl is here with Carl Sagan throwing down the raps. It's mostly electronic-type stuff.
Pharrell: Oh man, it's amazing. I mean, you gotta understand, this was the guy—when NASA wanted to send out something, a

Pharrell: I cannot believe you have this in album form.

Nardwuar: This is Carl Sagan doing the throw-down.

Pharrell: How did you...How?



MITCH CLEM

capsule—they asked him to put it together. So he had this diagram on it that was anodized in gold that had man, woman, and child; earth, sun, and moon; and you know…

Nardwuar: And some recordings, too, I think.

Pharrell: Yeah, recordings. You know what they put on there? They contacted Quincy Jones, and they put "Fly Me to the Moon," produced by Quincy and sung by Frank Sinatra. And also, he said that no matter where you were in the universe, the physics would still be the same. In terms of primary numbers, it would still be the same. He is incredible. The whole thing is based on, like, primary numbers. Sick, sick, sick, sick. He is a genius guy, man, genius guy.

Nardwuar: One genius guy is missing though. You're into the Carl Sagan. What does this particular person right here, Mister Mork, represent, Shay, to the member that's not here? [Nardwuar pulls out a Mork Doll]

Shay: [laughs] Chad [Hugo] would die right now.

Pharrell: He would.

Nardwuar: Why would Chad die over this particular thing right here? Could you explain, Pharrell?

Pharrell: Well, Mork from Ork, we grew up to that. You know, *Mork & Mindy*. That was a huge. That's na-nu, na-nu.

Nardwuar: So na-nu, na-nu plus Carl Sagan equals…

Pharrell: N.E.R.D. Honestly. What can you say?

Nardwuar: You guys played Virginia recently, and when you played Virginia, N.E.R.D., you did a shout-out to the Military Circle Mall.

Shay: [laughs] Yeah, we did! Yeah!

Pharrell: How'd you catch that?

Nardwuar: What can you tell the people about the Military Circle Mall, N.E.R.D.?

Pharrell: Well, that's a mall back home, where we're from. Where it's a little bit more urbanized. It's where all the cute black girls go.

Nardwuar: That's where everything was laid down, in Virginia. And I wanted to ask you particularly, Pharrell, about this joint right here. Is this where it all started, right here, with the "Rump Shaker"? [Nardwuar pulls out Wreckx-n-Effect's 12" LP "Rump Shaker"]

Pharrell and Shay: [long pause then laughter]

Nardwuar: Pharrell, is this where it started? Pharrell Williams. The "Rump Shaker"?

Pharrell: Yeah. This is one of the most impressive interviews I've ever experienced in my life. Seriously.

Nardwuar: Well, thank you so much! It's great to be able to talk to you guys.

Pharrell: This is insane, man. Do you see this? Who comes to an interview and hands you *Skateboarding Vancouver* style, a Mork from Ork *Mork & Mindy* doll, *Music of the Cosmos*, and a "Rump Shaker" record?

Nardwuar: Me, Nardwuar The Human Serviette interviewing N.E.R…

Pharrell: D. Stands for "Damn."

Nardwuar: What can you tell people about the "Rump Shakin'"? There's your name in tiny little print. Do you remember Pharrell, from back then there, Shay?

Shay: Of course I do. Yeah. He was a funny guy.

Nardwuar: What do you remember about this particular joint, "Rump Shaker," Pharrell?

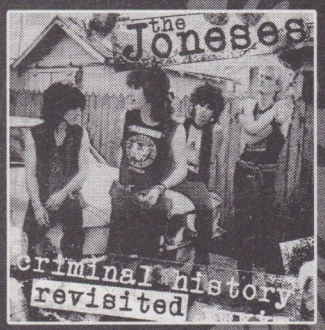
Pharrell: Umm… [Silence]

Nardwuar: You got your name in print. That's cool. From 1992.

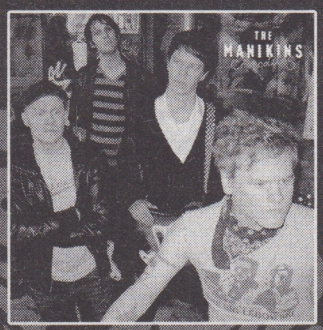
Pharrell: I'm bugging out. [Laughs] I can't believe he has this. [laughs] I just remember being the kid in high school, and definitely unfocussed, so I had, like, another year to

FULL BREACH KICKS

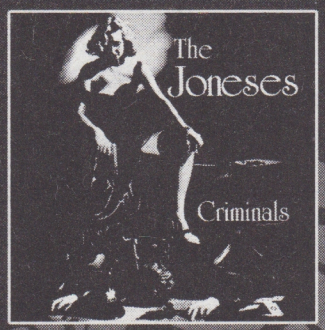
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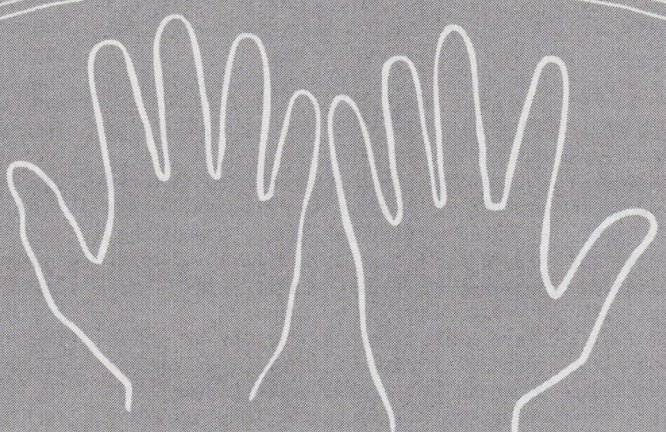


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go. And when this record came out, it was an amazing feeling. I was from Virginia Beach, Virginia, where there wasn't really a music industry at all.

Shay: I was still in high school. I remember that.

Nardwuar: And it was this gentleman Teddy Riley that helped you out, wasn't it? [Nardwuar pulls out a Teddy Riley 12"]

Pharrell: Yeah, it was Teddy.

Shay: [laughs]

Nardwuar: This is from the *Do the Right Thing* soundtrack, as well.

Pharrell: Right. Wow.

Nardwuar: So could you have gotten on the *Do the Right Thing* soundtrack? That was a few years earlier, wasn't it?

Pharrell: Yeah, this is before my time. Wow.

Nardwuar: All out of Virginia, Shay. You guys really rep the Virginia, don't you?

Shay: We try to.

Nardwuar: And that's what I was curious about. Looking at N.E.R.D., and thinking about you guys, your new record is called *Seeing Sounds*.

Pharrell: Yes sir.

Nardwuar: Now seeing sounds, is that an illusion, perhaps? Because on the cover of *Seeing Sounds* is it a giant gorilla, a giant ape?

Pharrell: Yeah, it's a giant gorilla.

Nardwuar: Was there not a theme park, The Ocean Breeze Fun Park in Virginia, that had a giant gorilla?

Pharrell: Shay…

Shay: You're insane.

Pharrell: [laughs]

Shay: You're absolutely right.

Nardwuar: And it got burnt down because somebody, like, shot an arrow into it?

Shay: Nah, it's still there.

Nardwuar: I thought it got burnt down and then they rebuilt it.

Shay: Oh yeah, you're absolutely right! They did. They sure did.

Pharrell: Ho-ly shit.

Shay: [laughs]

Nardwuar: So how does that all play into *Seeing Sounds*? Is that the connection? Is it from the gorilla from the Ocean Breeze Fun Park?

Pharrell: Umm. Maybe subconsciously?

Nardwuar: Shay, were you thinking of that at all?

Shay: No. Have you ever been to Virginia?

Nardwuar: No, I've never explored the fine shores of Virginia.

Pharrell: So how did you find that?

Nardwuar: I'm friends with the rock'n'roll band Gwar. No, I'm not. Actually, no, I was just taking a wild guess at it. Because the Ocean Breeze Fun Park had a giant gorilla, and I saw the cover of your record having a gorilla, so I thought I'd put it together.

Pharrell: Wow.

Shay: No.

Pharrell: That's crazy. That's crazy. You know what, let me—can I ask you questions?

Nardwuar: Go ahead, Pharrell.

Pharrell: Have you seen that documentary called *Zeitgeist*?

Nardwuar: Yes, I have.

Pharrell: What do you think about it?

Nardwuar: I've explored that, previously. It's hard to get to the bottom of that thing because there are so many YouTube chapters to go through. But I'm really open to learning new things.

Pharrell: We have the full movie. You have to see it. It's pretty interesting.

Nardwuar: Well, maybe when I'm waiting in the trailer to film the new N.E.R.D. video you can have that playing there for me. That will be my payment, right?

Pharrell: First of all, the answer is yes. He's gotta be there, Shay.

Shay: Yeah.

Pharrell: He's gotta be there. We'll arrange it. For sure. You have to at least open the video, or something.

Nardwuar: I'd be honored to do that.

Pharrell: He'd be perfect. You know what I'm talking about, right?

Shay: Yup.

Nardwuar: What were you thinking for the video? Can you disclose? What am I getting myself into when I get into a N.E.R.D. video?

Pharrell: It's pretty cool. We're going to get your information and we're gonna do it.

Nardwuar: What am I going to be wearing? Can I be me?

Pharrell: Absolutely.

Nardwuar: I don't have to play anybody else?

Pharrell: No. We wouldn't want you to, by the way. What you do is perfect, man. [laughs]

Nardwuar: N.E.R.D. Mount Trashmore. The Mount Trashmore skate park. You hang out there quite a bit, don't you?

Pharrell: Well, my younger brother did. When I went, there was this asphalt little thing called The Snake. And it was like a bowl, but it was in a snake form. And I used to bust my ass there. I was kind of one of the little posers hanging out watching the guys who really could skate. I was okay. I was an ollier and an axle-grinder and, you know, a couple of sadplants and a couple of launches off the quarter pipe. And when I was a kid, we hit quarter pipes and stuff like that. So I wasn't really… I'll never forget… By the way, I just met (pro skater Christian) Hosoi again.

Nardwuar: Profiled in the book *Skateboarding Vancouver*.

Pharrell: Okay, well, he came backstage to our show when we were in L.A. The first show. My brother Cato brought him back. But I'll never forget, he did a Christ Air in Virginia. He came to the skate park when I was a kid.

Nardwuar: That's the Mount Trashmore skate park. That's a neat name, isn't it, Shay?

Shay: Absolutely.

Nardwuar: Was there a rumor once that Mount Trashmore was going to blow up and people got scared?

Shay: No, not that I…

Pharrell: Yeah, there was a rumor. Yo, this is really scary. Yeah, people thought that the gasses from all the trash were somehow going to explode.

Nardwuar: A DJ started some rumor on the radio, like a *War of the Worlds* thing.

Pharrell: Your research is second to none. Second to none. And I can only imagine that you probably do the same kind of research with every band that you interview. So that's pretty impressive, man.

Nardwuar: Well, thank you. I really appreciate that, N.E.R.D., Pharrell, and Shay. That's very nice of you to say that. And I will launch right into The Chuck Norris Karate Studio.

Pharrell: Now you're playing dirty. [laughs] Why would you do that?!

Nardwuar: Well, I guess I was curious. The Chuck Norris Karate Studio. Is Chuck Norris actually at that karate studio? Because I noticed there is a Chuck Norris Karate Studio in Virginia, but he's not there, is he?

Pharrell: No, he's not. He came one time when I was a kid.

Nardwuar: And it caused some problems. How is that playing dirty, Shay?

Shay: I don't know. How is that playing dirty, Pharrell? [laughs]

Pharrell: Because it's embarrassing. [laughs] That's why!

Nardwuar: You guys are called N.E.R.D.

Pharrell: Yes, sir.

Nardwuar: Also in Virginia, and you're from Virginia, there's A.R.E. Edgar Cayce.

Pharrell: Wow. Okay, okay.

Nardwuar: Which stands for the Association for Research and Enlightenment.

Pharrell: Yeah, I go there all the time.

Nardwuar: That's sort of interesting. What do you think about A.R.E.? What can you tell the people about Edgar Cayce?

Pharrell: He was a renowned sleeping psychic. He was interesting—the way he came across, encountered his information. But there's a lot of holistic education you can get there. It's pretty interesting.

Nardwuar: Did you ever hang out at Aladdin's Castle video arcade at all?

Shay: Yeah.

Pharrell: [laughs]

Nardwuar: Was that a good chain?

Pharrell: It was cool. After you go to Japan, nothing matters anymore, though. Japan, that's the video game capital to me.

Nardwuar: N.E.R.D., Pharrell, you designed a chair. An amazing-looking chair. Is the N.E.R.D. phone next?

Pharrell: [laughs] Um, not a N.E.R.D. phone. But I gotta say, it's pretty scary. You're either psychic or like—I don't know. Like, you have some kind of remote viewing talent or something. Seriously, it's amazing.

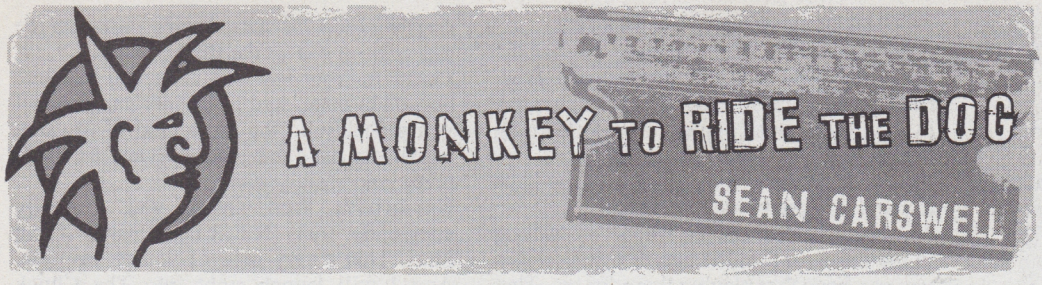
Nardwuar: Well, thank you! Remote viewing!

Pharrell: Yeah. I'm a fan.

Nardwuar: Well, thanks so much N.E.R.D. Keep on rockin' in the free world and doot doola doot doo...

Pharrell: Doo doo.

To hear and see this interview visit www.nardwuar.com



"The only difference between delusion and reality is corroboration."

SANCHO PANZA IN SANTA MONICA

I read *Don Quixote* as I gear up for my Hollywood moment: a lunch meeting with an actor and a director to discuss a screenplay that I have written. Since this is a Hollywood moment, I guess I'm not meeting for lunch or getting ready to eat lunch, I'm "doing" lunch. And what brought me to this parking lot outside of a French deli (really? A *French* deli?); what has led me to write, of all quixotic things, a screenplay? All of that will have to wait for a while. In the meantime, Don Quixote has to charge into the Spanish plains to defeat the notorious Polish-Turkish-Egyptian army, who have cleverly disguised themselves as sheep.

Don Quixote is a misunderstood figure. He's been simplified and mythologized in our cultural representations of him. We've come to forget the actual character that Cervantes wrote about. He's kind of a Rip Van Winkle in the sense that, if you read Washington Irving's story about Rip, you recognize that Rip was a drunk, a deadbeat dad, and a draft dodger who went on a twenty-year bender and made up a crazy story about sleeping for twenty years to cover his ass. But now Rip has turned into a Disney cartoon and a kid's story and everyone wants to believe his silly alibi about sleeping in the woods for two decades. I like him better as a drunk. Don Quixote is the same way. We all know the story about him seeing windmills on the plain, mistaking them for giants, and charging them atop his swayback nag. The windmills, of course, win. We interpret this act as the all-too-human chase after crazy dreams. We anoint Don Quixote as the patron saint of lost causes and futile endeavors. Look at him: he thinks he's a knight and there haven't been knights for centuries; he made his face shield out of cardboard and his lance is just a crooked tree branch. He must be mad. What we forget, though, is that Miguel de Cervantes wrote about a different Don Quixote. In Cervantes's novel, Don Quixote is not crazy. Not really.

This is as far as I get in the novel when the actor, Stu Smith, comes up beside my truck. I've known Stu since we were kids, since he moved into my neighborhood and instantly became the butt of two jokes. The first joke was about his dad, an aspiring stock broker who rode a moped. Sometimes we'd see him in the morning, us riding our bicycles to school, Stu's dad, decked out in a suit and tie, riding his moped to the brokerage. Even the briefcase bungeed to the back of his moped was funny. The second joke was about Stu being Jewish. He was known around the neighborhood as Stu the Bufu Jew. I called him that, too, even though I was only ten and had no idea what a bufu was. To be honest, I didn't even know what a Jew was.

Now when I see Stu, decades of memories float to the surface. Little moments long stored in the recesses of long term memory emerge. Like that time Stu and I were hanging out at a dull high school party and Stu formed a plan to make things better. I followed. We wandered a block away from the party and Stu uprooted a mailbox. I uprooted another. We switched the two out, then sallied on, pulling out mailboxes, swapping them with others, making sure that no house had the right mailbox in front of it for two blocks down Catalina Isles.

Of course it was ridiculous, but it was something to do.

And now Stu is an actor. You don't know this, but you've seen him on TV. He's one of the tens of thousands of faces you pass as you flip the channels. Sometimes, he's painting his face and chanting, "Roughing the palate!" in a beer commercial, sometimes he's flirting with Wanda Sykes in a sitcom, sometimes he's in a robot costume on the *Jimmy Kimmel Show* or a banker on a drama destined for cancellation after four episodes or a burn victim or an angel or a golfer. Most of his roles are credited as either an occupation or a number: Heart and Lung Technician, Customer #2. I once rented the movie *Rat Race*, fast-forwarded until Stu popped onto the screen as a co-pilot, rewound and watched Stu and the pilot bang heads about fifteen times, laughed like hell each time, then turned off the movie. That was two dollars well spent.

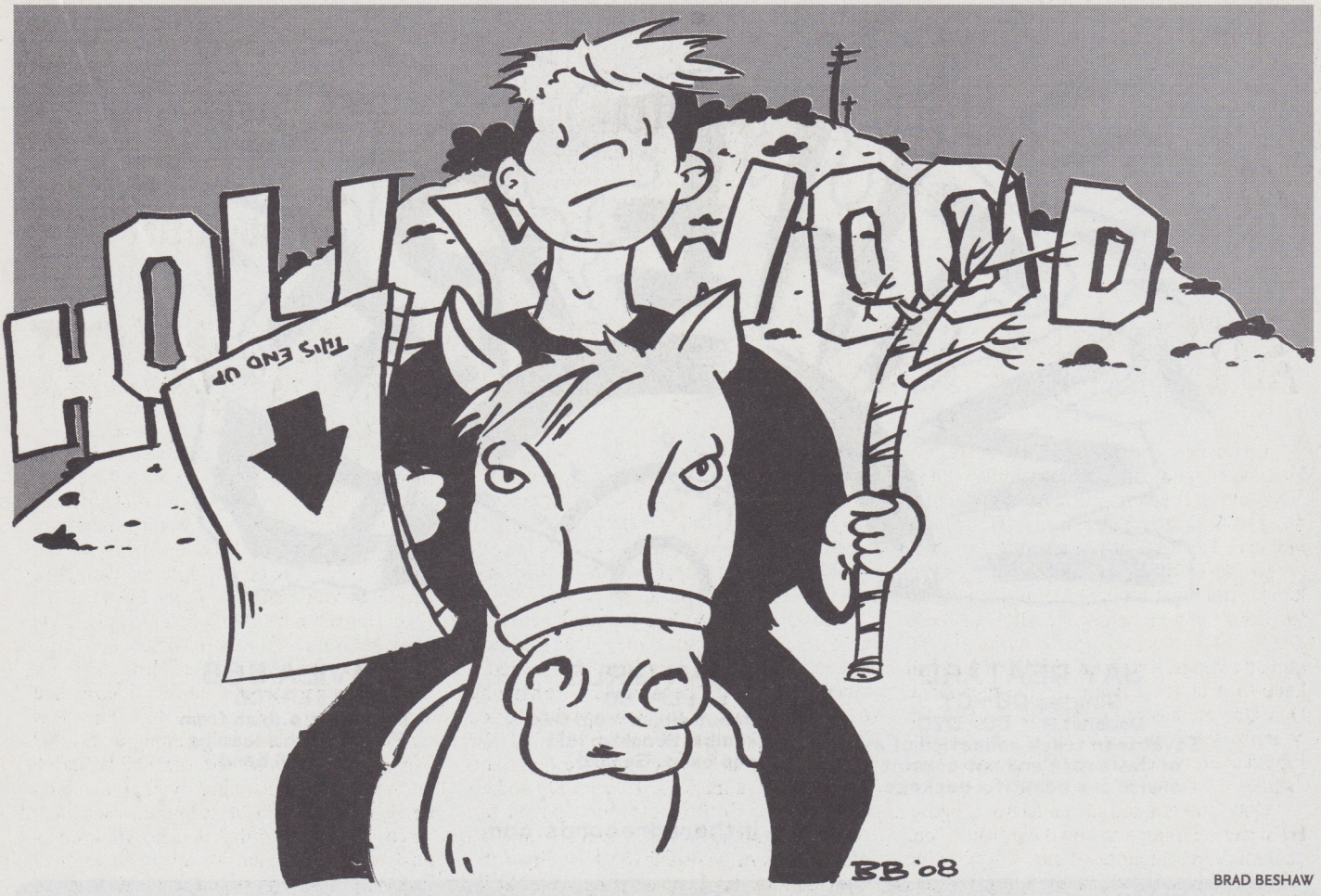
Stu is a big part of why I wrote the screenplay. In the screenplay, the main character is named Stu, nicknamed Stu the Bufu Jew, and he sometimes dresses in a suit and rides a moped.

In real life, Stu stands in front of me as I still have half of my head in *Don Quixote* and I can't help wondering about Stu as an actor and me as a screenwriter, and thinking, which one of us is Don Quixote in this scenario? I'm the one living in my head when I write the screenplay. Stu is the one who's hoping to act it all out, though in a socially acceptable way. Can we both be Don Quixotes? And, if there's two people living out the delusion, doesn't that go against the very notion of Quixote's insanity? After all, the only difference between delusion and reality is corroboration. If Don Quixote's squire, Sancho Panza, had seen giants on the Spanish plain instead of windmills, then Don Quixote wouldn't have been delusional at all. He would have been a fallen hero.

And what about Sancho Panza, the squire? If he really believes that Quixote is mad, why does Sancho go along with him? Why does he leave his wife and child and ride out onto the Spanish plains with a man who believes himself to be a knight, especially when you consider that Sancho knows he's not going to get paid for all of his efforts? Is Sancho really as stupid as generations of readers have accused him of being?

Stu sees what I've been reading. He tells me that, after he acted in his first play, his parents gave him a gift. It was a matching set of Spanish statues, one of Don Quixote, the other of Sancho Panza. This information freaks me out a bit. I don't say anything. We head to the deli.

The restaurant is perfect for people in the movie business in the sense that it focuses more on image than substance. A ham sandwich is called "jambon de Paris," a salami sandwich is a "saucisson." We meet up with the director and he's a Hollywood insider in the sense that he makes a living off of movies. He's written several screenplays that have turned into movies starring, well, big stars. He's also a Hollywood outsider in the sense that he's recently written and directed an independent film that features no stars, that he funded himself, and that he's been showing at film festivals all around the country. He's got a few suggestions for revisions on the screenplay, little things that he knows from making movies and I don't know because I've only written novels, short stories, *Razorcake* columns, and that type of thing. Overall, though, he likes the screenplay. He likes it enough to offers to direct the movie, even though he knows there's no money in it and he's just turned down an offer to direct a movie for the Lifetime network. When the director makes this offer, I look at Stu. It suddenly becomes clear to me which one of us is which.



BRAD BESHAW

THEY ENDED UP LEAGUES ABOVE THE SLOW STARVATION THAT ATE AWAY AT THEM WHEN THEY STAYED HOME.

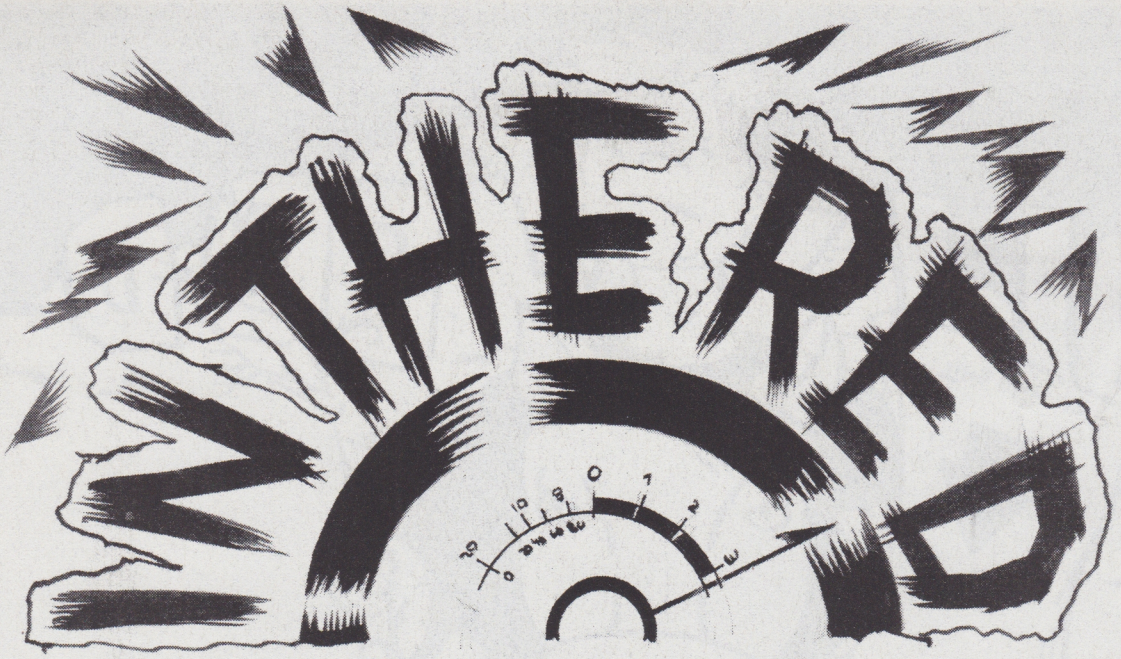
Maybe I imagine it, but I think I see the flashes of thoughts in Stu's eyes. Maybe he can actually make this movie. Maybe he knows people who can fund it. Maybe he can actually be the star and not the guy laying on a stretcher, covered in burn-victim makeup. Maybe those aren't really sheep on the Spanish plain. Maybe he really is taking on the Polish-Turkish-Egyptian army. Maybe he could be a knight.

Before Don Quixote set out on his adventures, he was a hidalgo. Hidalgos were landed gentlemen who, in the early seventeenth century, had no real means of supporting themselves, but social conventions dictated that they could not work or earn money. So Don Quixote was both a member of the nobility and a victim of abject poverty. He was literally starving when he set forth on his first sally. Sancho Panza was socially and economically below Don Quixote. After they set out on their adventures, though, they managed to find big, free meals most nights. They flirted with attractive (and sometimes horribly unattractive) women and fought with rogues; they met interesting people and heard great stories. Insane, stupid, or not, they had a lot of fun. Even if most of their adventures left them battered and bruised, they still ended up leagues above the slow starvation that ate away at them when they stayed home.

When Stu started his acting career, he was coming off of a ten-year stint as a stock broker—a job that ate away at his stomach lining, that pushed him into middle age before he had time to reach his thirtieth birthday. When my first novel came out, I worked as a construction superintendent—a job that made me feel like I was starving even as my weight ballooned.

Now I watch the flickers of maybes in Stu's eyes. I feel a little like Sancho, sitting on my mule, drinking my wine, not sure yet whether or not I'll jump in and help out if Don Quixote starts to get his ass kicked again. I reminisce about writing the screenplay and about all the childhood memories it triggered and about how time has let me and Stu take some of the pain of adolescence and turn it into a comedy. I listen to the director tell these dazzling stories about the Hollywood only insiders see. I eat my glorified salami sandwich, and even that tastes pretty fucking good. And, at this point, it doesn't matter to me whether the movie gets made or not. Insane, stupid, or not, it's all been pretty fun, leagues above the slow starvation of doing nothing.

–Sean Carswell



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PRINTING AND REPLICATION FOR INDEPENDENT RECORD LABELS AND BANDS SINCE 1994

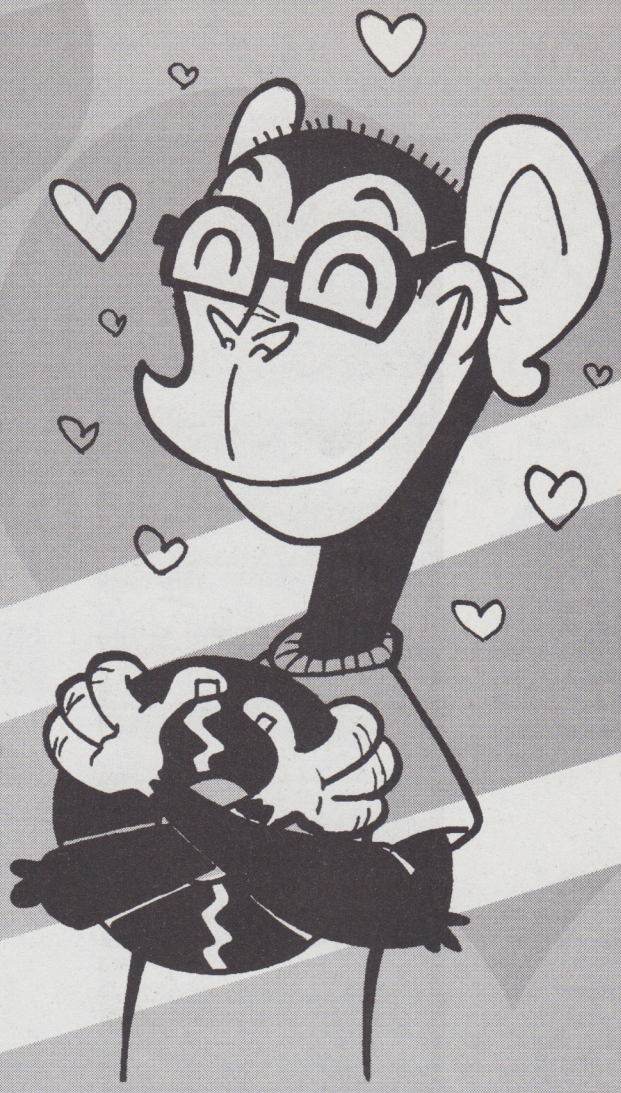


Dan Monick's Photo Page

Coney Island, Sept 7th 2007 - Fuck Disney World

One Punk's Guide to...

...Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying About Punk and Started Loving Music



I've come to a point in my life where I just don't care what people who I don't know think about me. Double that for my musical tastes. I'm not asking for anyone's approval of my record collection. The world's got much bigger concerns.

I'm a punk rocker, however I've wrestled with the concept because I'm a piss-poor "ism"ist and I've consistently resisted being labeled. But be involved with something for over twenty years and it's hard not to consider it a part of your character. My life isn't all punk, all the time, but it is a big part of my life, for better or worse.

As a culture, many punks are squeamish about venturing outside of the confines that have previously been set. Plus, you have to admit, there's a hell of a lot of great punk rock out there. It's impossible to stay on top of it, find it, and absorb it all. So why even bother with other genres? Here's why.

There are things out there that might not be punk at all, but they're great and worthwhile. If we look at 'em in new ways, we may learn even more about punk because it hasn't been looked at in quite that way. Who knows?

By Todd Taylor, editor and publisher of *Razorcake*
Illustrations by Art Fuentes | Graphic Design by Dave Disorder

No Easy Pieces

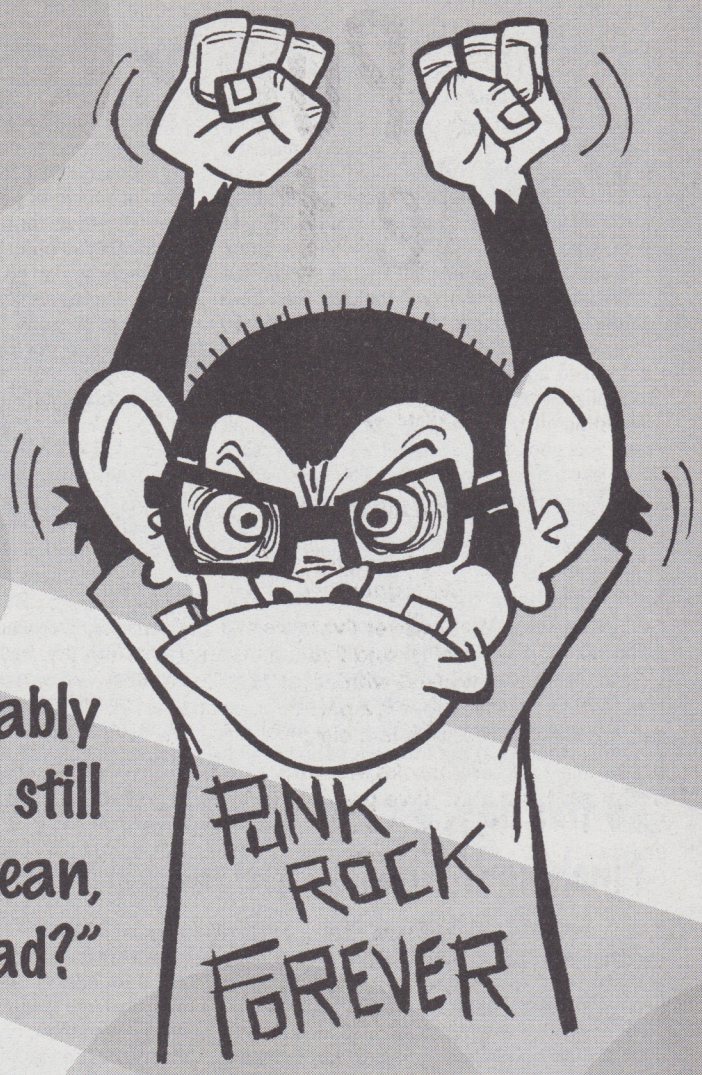
For over a decade-long stretch, when I was first discovering punk, I began believing more and more that listening to anything else was a form of musical treason. It wasn't a treason I'd accuse others of, but a treason I wasn't willing to commit myself. And, yet, it wasn't as grandiose as it sounds. I'd liken it to neckties. I don't like wearing them if I don't have to—but I'm not going to go off on everyone who does.

Aw, crap. I'm already a bit ahead of myself. Let me back up. When I was ten, I was a passive accepter of music. It got played on the radio. Not a lot of thought went into taste. I didn't think in terms of genre. I liked it or I didn't. My dad played The Kingston Trio and *Sing Along with Mitch Miller* on the reel-to-reel. We must have had several Beach Boys cassettes that were played in the car, because when I hear some of those songs, I can still see desert landscapes whiz by a rolled-down window. Music helped pass the time. One day, I remember being in the garage, doing chores, and Casey Kasem was doing a year-end countdown. Survivor's "Eye of the Tiger" was high on that list. And I remember asking, "This band is so popular. It must be great music. Why else would so many people listen to it?" My dad just nodded. He didn't seem to mind too much what was playing. It was just something free to listen to that wasn't silence. It was during this time that, since I'd never seen a radio station, I thought that all of the bands were playing live at the radio station, one after another, and that's a big reason why particular stations played the same bands over and over again.

When I hit eleven, I took a liking to Huey Lewis And The News. 1983 saw the release of *Sports*, a record that would go on to sell over seven million copies. They had a cool video of "I Want a New Drug" on *Night Flight,* a show that came on late Friday on network television. To this day, without thinking about it, I can sing along to the entire album, even though I have no affection for or repulsion to Huey Lewis. These memories remain inert, like what type of pants—green Toughskins—I wore at the time. I have no nostalgia for this music, either. My taste was scattershot, primarily restricted to what was being played on broadcast commercial radio.

At thirteen, I remember catching the first hint of politics in music. Although the record had been released two years before in 1985, U2's "Sunday Bloody Sunday" off of *War,* would occasionally get played. Attached to that song was a new musical term that the DJs kept repeating: alternative. That was something that sounded good. Alternative. An alternative to Phil Collins' *No Jacket Required.* An alternative to Genesis, who was on the cusp of a huge resurgence and going multiplatinum. I had no concept of the business mechanisms behind the music industry—that essentially the same people brought the masses U2, "Sussudio," and *Invisible Touch.* Yet, in the purest sense, I was beginning to want something different from the music I listened to. I just had no bearings.

For the life of me, no matter how long I tried to drum up a memory, I can't remember how or why I first took a liking to punk. It definitely wasn't a crystal clear revelation. I don't remember "that song," or "that show," or "that band," but a more nebulous sifting that took years and slowly came into focus. I wasn't even sure what I was listening *for*. I just got to listening to music more and more, likening it to food or water. It was something I couldn't do without for a long period of time. It was a slow filtration. I do remember feeling like an alien and was beginning to look for things that weren't widely accepted because these widely accepted songs were



"You seem reasonably intelligent. Why do you still listen to punk? I mean, isn't it dead?"

partially why I was feeling that alienation. By the slowest of degrees, my tastes were shifting from general acceptance to wanting something in a song that spoke directly to me. It wasn't going to be at the top of the charts. I just started looking, pretty much randomly.

My search for this "something" began in a rural Nevada town, Boulder City, in 1987. I was fifteen. It was a lot of blind digging. Before the internet, it might take years to even catch wind of a band and then a couple more to find a warbly tape of one of their records. I was living in a small town before it had a bus line to Las Vegas, thirty miles away, and I had no driver's license. I parted ways with Huey Lewis And The News and U2 and began to listen to a mishmash of "imports" that I'd gleaned from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas community radio station, KUNV. At night, when the station gave way to "The Rock Avenue" program, alone in my room, is where "alternative" took traction, where the word "punk" began to mean something I could actually understand the shape of by listening to it on a regular basis. Listening to the DJs, it seemed like punk was on the wane, like most of the great stuff had already happened.

On the "alternative" side of things were bands like The Cure, R.E.M., Oingo Boingo, The Smiths, Love And Rockets, The Smithereens, The Jesus And Mary Chain, and The Housemartins. It was, basically, music by folks who wore frilly shirts or weren't really happy about how the world was going but sung it in a way that didn't sound like a bomb taking apart the stereo. This stuff wasn't punk, but I liked it. It was different. It thrilled me that not many other people where I lived knew about these bands. Music was starting to become part of my personality, something I identified strongly with. (Since I'm doing a fair amount of confession, I have to get something off of my chest. I once blatantly lied and said I loved Information Society. I did get sex out of it, but she later broke my heart. This shit's complex.)

To find new bands, I would tape both sides of a ninety-minute tape off of KUNV, public service announcements and all. Community radio DJs are a scrappy, noble bunch, but they aren't known to be the best at remembering to say what songs they just played. If there was a song I especially took a fancy to, I'd listen to that tape again and again to try to piece together who it was that I liked. Dag Nasty's a band I loved for years before knowing their name. I got bummed out on Hüsker Dü—for years, mind you—because I had mis-heard their name, and mixed them up with The Hoodoo Gurus, who I didn't like so much. I spent the better part of five years looking for a band called Bloody Days. It turned out that that was an album title. And that wasn't quite right either. It was *Blood Days*, no "y" at the end. The band was Unity. And after all that searching, the record wasn't half as good as I'd remembered. Let's just say that there were a lot of false starts.

Other times, I'd totally luck out. The Dead Kennedys, one year after they broke up, popped up on my radar. Here was a band who pissed people off just because of their name. And it wasn't just conservative and religious people who could get bent out of shape over the mildest of social infractions but liberal-minded people who I respected really hated the *idea* of the band. When I went to buy one of their records, I do remember having no idea which one to get, so I went with a posthumous collection which had just come out: *Give Me Convenience or Give Me Death*. The music had the feeling of pornography, like the record should have been kept in a brown paper bag at all times and listened to on the sneak. I even remember thinking it could be like audio masturbation; listening to too much of it could make me go deaf instead

of blind. What a great feeling that was; to feel that very real sense of danger, but being in the very capable hands of the Kennedys.

During high school, it took me several years to calibrate my punk radar. I read my first *Flipside* and rented Target Videos from Tower Records. When my parents would drive me, I'd take the list I'd made from listening to KUNV to The Record Exchange, a dinky store in a nondescript mini mall in Las Vegas that specialized in what I was looking for—both alternative and punk. It was usually a 50/50 chance that they'd get what I requested, even if I put in an order. It was then that I started to realize—even though I'd of have been the last to admit it at the time—that not all punk rock was good just because it was punk rock. I tried to convince myself that The Clash's *Cut the Crap* was really just misunderstood genius, but there's no excuse for that record or the lines, "Don't talk shop. Finger pop!" (Years later, I would read up on the inner struggles of The Clash and come to the conclusion that a Clash without Mick Jones wasn't much of a Clash at all. It's also ironic that the only studio Clash record with someone with a mohawk on the cover is the one that sucks the most.)

During this time, I began to eye any form of music that wasn't in the punk ballpark with suspicion, especially if it had experienced any sort of widespread popularity. It was partially out of loyalty. If punk rock really had changed my life like I was thinking it had, I wasn't about to turn my back on it and start listening to dance music, jam bands, or go back to Top 40 radio. Part of it was out of stubbornness and part of it was faith. Listening to other forms of music, I thought, would dilute my love and take precious time away from constant digging to find more and more punk to listen to. (The more you collect, the more it collects you.)

This was also a time when people less committed to punk rock's first and second waves—and more interested in developing serious drug habits and other life problems—were unloading their used records to stores at reasonable retail prices. I was that twerp kid who found a Bags 7" in the bin for three bucks and gave it a shot because I liked their name. I went back the next month and got the first Necros 7" because I liked the name. Both 7"s rocked. I ended up liking the music on both 7"s very much, and I developed a huge crush on Alice Bag, especially after seeing her in *Decline of Western Civilization*.

Due to my long, relatively isolated, and deliberate search for this precious material, I would have freaked out on you if you had told me that there'd come a time in this punk rocker's life when it'd be important to branch out a little bit, musically. It took some heavy lifting to unearth this stuff. I felt like an accident prone prospector, breaking my back while collecting tons of this ore, then crunching it down to ounces of precious gems.

If you said, "Chill out, little dude. Don't be so dogmatic. If you love punk rock, listening to other forms of music isn't going to taint or compromise that love. The opposite. With a love of music in general as the bedrock, you may discover more reasons to love punk," I probably would have muttered under my breath for you to go fuck yourself and cranked some Rudimentary Peni in your general direction. I would have let my musical taste speak for me. As loudly as possible.

A Search for Crude Notes

In 1988, when I was sixteen, punk started to take solid form around my ears. I could name bands out of a song lineup on a mix tape that a friend played. The bands sounded different from one another, but I could tell they were punk; JFA, Circle Jerks, Suicidal Tendencies, Agent Orange, Bad Religion, Crass, Dead Kennedys, Descendents, the Ramones, and The Clash all had something, broadly, in common. Those were my favorites. I knew little about their histories, which records came first, where the bands were from, or that sometimes thousands of people came to their shows. All of that was a jumble. All I knew for sure is that I spent most of my time with just me and them, on my headphones, in my Walkman, on my stereo at home. And that made me feel much better. Socially, I was largely left to my own devices in high school. I was quiet, did my work, let people cheat off of my tests, and occasionally got asked if I was a foreign exchange student.

My growing impulse, by hopping on this slow-moving steamroller of collecting and accumulating more punk in a large void, was to eventually build up enough of an arsenal to dismiss "inferior" types of music and claim their irrelevance. My aim was to continue listening to solely one thing, fully justified that I'd made the right and best choice. (Except, perhaps the alternative bands I liked and the Kingston Trio, who I still enjoyed listening to with my dad. Admittedly, it was an imperfect punk Puritanism, but I was taught to make plans and set goals.) This was partially because punk talked about "destroying the future, destroying the past." It was partially because, if you lived in a high desert town during this time in America, you would have sworn the national anthem was written by Def Leppard, Queensrÿche, Whitesnake, or Poison; that solos, spandex, and men in makeup with teased hair who married lingerie models slithering on exotic cars were essential elements to songwriting. Metal was huge and I wanted no part of it. (I would call a détente if I got in a car with a metal friend. Metallica, Slayer, and, occasionally, Anthrax tended to be the best options.)

There was a smattering of decent songs on commercial radio, but it was repetitive. The accompanying soundtrack to the blue collar workday was classic rock. It was as mandatory as a uniform with a name tag. I blame KKLZ (the LZ for Led fuckin' Zeppelin, man) that essentially played the same national standard playlist of The Who, AC/DC, and Creedence songs over and over again (and who "got the Led out" at Friday's quitting time by playing three Zeppelin songs in a row, or in a medley, due to time constraints). I got to hating all of those bands—their entire catalogs (which I hadn't heard), their hairstyles, to how they strutted in leather pants—merely by being bludgeoned with the same chords over and over again when working as a tow truck driver in the extreme heat. I may have found my "happy place" in music years ago, but to this day, certain songs make me feel like an abused puppy at the pound, flinching at the first hint of a "masterful solo" like it's a cocked hand, ready to slap me directly back to a very dark place.

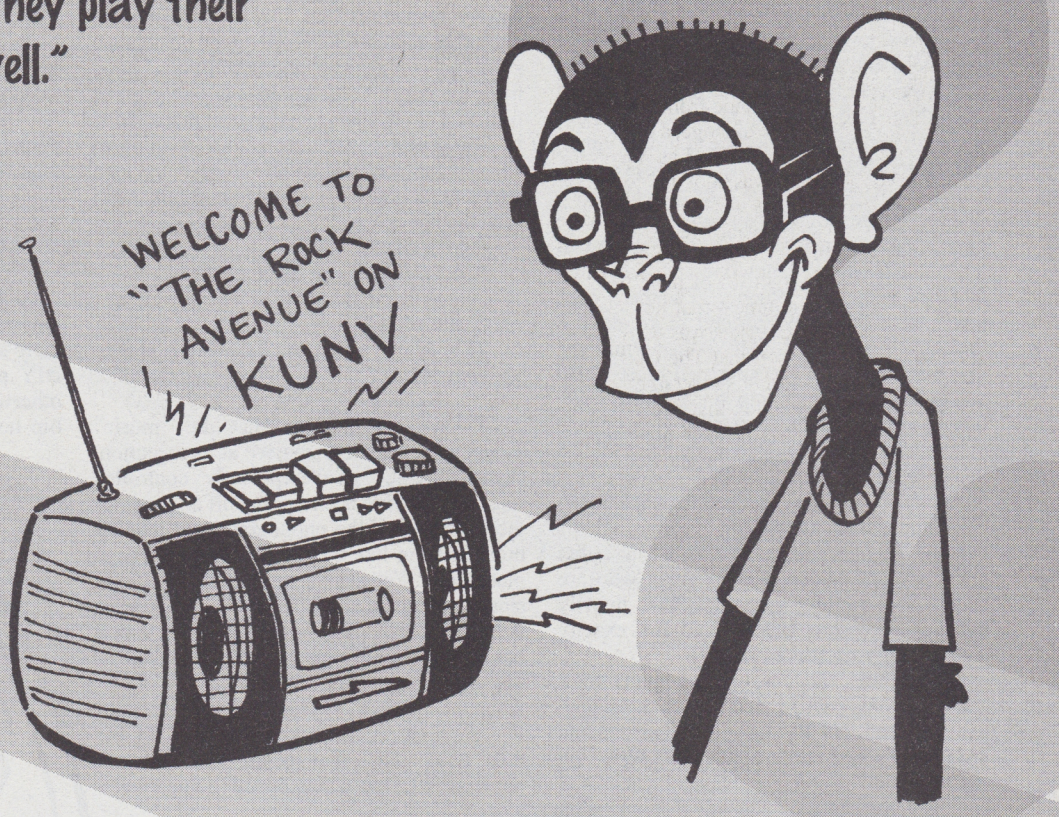
End the Song Five Minutes Ago

Along came college and I ended up in a rural Arizona town, where most of the students traded in their footwear for open-toed sandals and then proceeded to spin in circles to songs without end. I had a slight inkling that more good music—music that was unironically good, music that rocked by its own definition and I'd like it, music that wasn't punk or even close enough to attempt to glue it to punk (alterna-punk, funk punk, cowpunk, post punk, or punky) but good—was out there. In a new place, I hit up friends who seemed to be on a different music tip than me. Maybe they knew something I didn't. We traded tapes, hung out, and listened to records. I quickly realized that "proficient musicianship" wasn't what I was seeking. I'm not a fan of musicians who are praised because, "you have to admit they play their instruments really well." I have to admit no such thing. Do we applaud serial killers because they have tidy apartments and expertly sharpened knives? No. Because if proficiency was the sole criteria for creating music worth listening to, its logical conclusion would be classical music. (Or robot music, which would later pop up as electronica, but that's technically cyborg music: half human, half machine.) Those classical folks spend their whole lives practicing and playing that style of music. Put fifty of them together in an orchestra and they all get involved in playing the same song. That's sophisticated stuff. And if I can't get through a suite or two of "proficiency" without getting sleepy, there's no fuckin' way you're going to convince me to listen to The Grateful Dead, Phish, Rush, Blues Traveler, or Col. Bruce Hampton And The Aquarium Rescue Unit by my own volition solely

To this day, certain songs make me feel like an abused puppy at the pound, flinching at the "masterful solo" like it's a cocked hand, ready to slap me.

I'm not a fan of musicians who are praised because, "you have to admit they play their instruments really well."

I have to admit no such thing.



because "they're really good musicians." I like my songs to end. And if I take drugs, I don't want the songs to bum me out.

So much "progress" in music sounds like mutts and mongrels hastily splooged together, making musical genres that produce retarded-sounding offspring: Nü metal? Punktronica? Progressive math rock? Concept albums about armadillo tanks? (ELP's *Tarkus*.) No thanks. Why is it that anything "progressive" involves the musical equivalent of someone masturbating into my ear? I continued my search.

It's not that punk was letting me down or that I was dissatisfied with it—in Flagstaff, I enjoyed seeing local punks Primitive Tribes and R.N.—but I knew there were missing links. Before it had a name, punk had to have come from somewhere. Manic energy, raw delivery, and alienation weren't solely the birth rites of music made in the late '70s. I felt I was looking at a map with just a few points of interest labeled. The rest was unmarked, and there wasn't a legend to follow. I *knew* this music land existed, but I had few ideas on how to explore the invisible parts of it.

I was convinced I was missing something. I knew that music genres inevitably bleed into one another, borrow from one another, cross pollinate, and sometimes merge. There *had* to be precursors to punk. I didn't necessarily think these precursors had anything to do with punk or that they would even care about punk coming into existence after they were long gone, merely that they were the wellspring. They could have influenced some of my favorite artists and I didn't know about them. There's something great about going to the source, to hear the beginning, then hearing how it has rippled, roiled, and eroded over time. It was a search for the pure elements in music.

Clones in Clones' Clothing

In 1996, I found myself in the belly of the punk beast, putting in time at *Flipside Fanzine* (which had been publishing continuously since the summer of 1977). I was immediately awash in punk rock music morning, noon, and night. It was so much music that it seemed to choke me at times. 1997 saw the continued saturation of every third-rate punk band sending in a CD to get reviewed and requesting an interview. I found myself asking, "Is this it? Is this all that it's come to?" With Nirvana, Green Day, and the Offspring all making it to the big time and thousands of bands trying to replicate that success, what bummed me out the most was that my understanding of punk—which was a very personal perception—got whittled down to mean a close-cropped, mid-paced, melodic, "well-produced" form of music. And while there had been that element in punk for ages, filled with great bands—from Stiff Little Fingers, the Buzzcocks, The Rezillos, and The Undertones—that was just one take on it. In this "large stage punk" that would sprout the Warped Tour and the mentality that it pervades, there didn't seem to be any room for weirdness, sickness, smallness, or noticeable deviation from a template. No Wipers. No Big Boys. No Dicks. No Freeze. No Replacements. No Articles Of Faith. No Minutemen. It was beginning to sound a lot like a strictly regulated "alternative" to commercial radio, which was no worthwhile alternative at all because it employed the same methods of dispersion, mimicked the same tactics of exclusion.

Thankfully, punk rock didn't give up the ghost. It didn't end when the late '90s wave of punk crashed on shore only to disappear in foam. It didn't end with emo. It didn't end with farm-raised corporate punk rock. The punk rock that I grew up loving quietly left the national stage and regrouped. It may be a clonky-sounding way to describe something I hold dearly, but I love *DIY* punk rock: music where business isn't the highest consideration in getting it done.

DIY punk rock also came to my rescue in an unexpected form. In much the same way that I had scoured the "thanks list" on old punk records for hints to other punk bands, I began unearthing more of music's hidden roots from modern DIY punk bands and their influences buried in liner notes, song lyrics, or in their cover songs. Everyone from Motörhead to Hank Williams Sr. (and Jr.), from Leadbelly to Link Wray, from Little Richard to Patsy Cline, from The Sonics to Wilson Pickett, I found because I listened closely to punk, listened to my now-vast network of music-obsessed friends. One defining day was sitting down and reading along to Dillinger Four's *Midwestern Songs of the Americas*. In the span of one two minute, twenty-two second song, "Doublewhiskeycokenoice,"

they opened to door to writer Nelson Algren and singer Otis Redding, men who would become two of my favorite artists.

Another time was at Linda's Doll Hut, a tiny venue in Anaheim. It had been a retardedly great show that was more like a party at someone's house than a show at a bar: Soviettes, Fleshies, Marked Men, and Toys That Kill. At two AM, the bartender wanted everyone gone so she could go home. Yelling nicely didn't stir any extra movement. Flashing the lights didn't hasten anyone's departure. She resorted to another page in the psychological warfare handbook—similar to when the Marines taunted dictator Manuel Noriega with Van Halen's "Panama" over loudspeakers for days on end in an attempt to flush him out of the Vatican embassy. She calculated, "What song will most likely drive this bunch out into the parking lot?" She chose country artist David Allan Coe's "Long-Haired Redneck" and cranked the PA in an attempt to clear the room.

Perhaps it's that most of my friends—bless them—are drunk, fat dudes. Perhaps I dwell in a subculture of a subculture that is roundly misunderstood by folks who are standing right next to us, but that heavily tattooed bartender lady played the exactly wrong song to achieve her goal.

Most of the crowd stopped their conversations, cocked their ears to the sound, then cheered. By the time the chorus came around the second time, punks were drowning out Mr. Coe.

"But the country DJs all think I'm an outlaw/ They'd never come to see me in this dive/ where bikers stare at cowboys who are laughin' at the hippies/ who are prayin' they'll get out of here alive."

Picture a conga line of sweaty hugs, beers held aloft and spilling, from-the-belly singing, and a small sea of smiles. After the song, it felt like the evening at The Doll Hut had its proper closure. Everyone left shortly after.

So, yeah. I was feeling less alone and more comfortable with my musical legs stretching out into completely different genres. I had become a self-confessed punk rocker unabashedly enjoying other forms of music in public.

Mental and Corporate Plantations

As I've gotten older, been at parties, and had conversation turn to what I do, people seem largely respectful that I'm an independent publisher. If pressed, I'll tell them I do a music magazine. ("Fanzine" seems to have slipped from the national dictionary.) If I'm pressed further, I'll tell them what *Razorcake*'s focus is. Being in my mid-thirties and listening to what most consider solely rebellious teen music sometimes just doesn't compute with very nice people.

Here's an example.

"So, is that all you listen to? Punk?"

"No. I listen to a lot of different music."

"Like what?"

"I'm really picky, but I have this theory and here it is…"

I have no illusions that the "music" industry was any less abusive at its inception. (Read "music" as "corporately controlled music.") They've been ripping off artists since the invention of the phonograph and treating most of them like they're slaves on financial plantations. Yet there's no denying that ever since the end of the '70s, the time an artist is given to prove themselves on major labels has gotten shorter and shorter. It used to be that musicians would be given three or four albums to prove themselves commercially. It was called "artistic development." By the '90s, if an artist's first record wasn't even a moderate hit, they'd be dropped (Schleprock, Jawbreaker, and the Misfits immediately come to mind). By the beginning of the 2000s, bands had a one-song chance to prove it on the radio or get shelved. With the advent of the MP3 player and wide cell phone usage, a band may be judged by as little as ten notes of one song before their chance is over. We now live in a finicky, A.D.D. digital world.

I want music. I don't want bands whose sole purpose and goal is to sell me something other than their music. I already have a "lifestyle," thank you very much. I don't need to purchase a pre-packaged one like a meal deal from the drive-thru at a fast food restaurant.

What I listen to, what I really enjoy, is largely made by people who love the music they're playing, and, for better or for worse, there's not a lot of money involved. In DIY punk and—I'd be ignorant to assume otherwise—DIY music communities like hip hop, the great part about it now is that



We aren't dealing with human beings singing into a can anymore.

We're dealing with robots.

musicians can totally go back, sample, or pay homage to artists who got overlooked or largely dismissed during their own time. The internet now provides an unprecedented level of access—unmatched since the inception of recorded music—to a seemingly infinite body of music that musicians and music lovers can pick up on. (From Betty Davis's 1974 album, *They Say I'm Different,* with its dirty/sexy funk beat being picked up by hip hop, to obscure L.A. punk collector weirdo classics like The Weasels' "Beat Her With a Rake" being available as an MP3, instead of shelling out well over a thousand dollars for the vinyl.) It's high time to make some advantage of the interweb, no? You just have to know how to search for stuff through the tumbleweed-strewn static of that digital wasteland.

We're in a time when we can cherry pick the best of the past. I love it when a DIY band starts infusing straight-up Stax-styled soul, Doo-Wop, Sun Records-style country, funk, or bluegrass. Few bands play those styles anymore on a large or small stage, and even fewer bands play these styles that aren't strictly cover or tribute bands. There was nothing "wrong" or "played out" with these styles, so why not go back to the roots? Why not give direct attention to Otis Redding and ignore the smooth panderings of modern R&B? I'd pit Merle Haggard's "Fightin' Side of Me" against any ball-draggin', urban-digital, modern country fucktard's xenophobic hit any day of the week.

The "music" industry is still heavily involved in fostering a form of near-automatic musical amnesia on a popular culture scale. This is so they can define their particular concept of what "music" is to people over and over again. It's in their best interest.

One of the lynchpins of the "music" industry has traditionally been distribution: not only controlling all aspects of manufacturing and dispersing the actual units, but getting it into the hands of people who have the influence for it to reach a broader audience. Every step of the way is a toll booth. For instance, for a band to be played on KROQ in Los Angeles, their songs must meet certain "sonic fidelity requirements." That's basically a nice way of saying if a major label-style budget hadn't been dumped into the recording, there was no chance a song would be played. I was involved with a band that was told by KROQ, "We really like your record. For $3,000, we'll re-record one song on your album. But we still can't promise that we'll play it on the air." The offer was declined. Payola and pay-to-play is alive and well in commercial, corporate radio. It's just become so systemized within multinational corporations that DJs are no longer the ones calling the shots. This formulation of "music" is focus-grouped, market-tested, web-statted, and constantly honed to a finer and finer point. The "music" industry may be squawking about illegal MP3 downloads killing "music," but the system apparently works well enough for them to continue as an industry. Tens of millions of people still buy shit-tastic albums every year. The tools are evolving, but the effects been the same for awhile.

Since four entertainment corporations (Universal, Sony BMG, Warner, and EMI) still control the lion's share of the distributing, publishing, advertising, and manufacturing of recorded music, a vast majority of the population gets the impression that whatever hundred artists are being pushed at any one time are the only viable options of what can be considered "music." (If I walk up to the taco truck lady and talk about the radness of The Future Virgins without any sort of preamble, there's a 99.9 percent chance she'll have no idea what I'm talking about. The same would not be true if I asked her about Jessica Simpson without any sort of introduction because Ms. Simpson is currently not only on the radio, but due to media conglomeration, her persona is bundled into TV, glossy magazines, and a clothing line. She is actively selling much more than just her "music.") Like the division between rich and poor, the two realities between "music" and music are getting bigger and more sharply defined.

Oh, I'm sure there are some exceptions. "But, dude, there are good popular musicians." Go ahead and make a case for Jack White. Fine. Tell me that Beck is the modern Bob Dylan or that a singer out-Aretha's Ms. Franklin. But, by their very nature—even if I don't buy the argument of their "voice of a generation"-ness status—these artists are anomalies, working in an industry that tolerates them purely by their sales, their supposed "star and fame stock," or by the binding strength of their contracts. It's quite simple. Given to their own devices, the "music" industry as it is today produces "music" and artists Protooled to the 1,000th of a second. We aren't dealing with human beings singing into a can anymore. We're dealing with robots. They sound like robots, move like tarted-up sex-borgs in a music-video world based on unpaid credit, and have become mere parts of a much larger machine. No thanks. I'll take the endless parade of musical monkeys that *Razorcake* covers before ever caring what the robots do.

And every artist from Hole to Rage Against The Machine who said they were going to take the machine down from the inside? They lied or were delusional. The machine has paid them well and they've since shut their fuckin' mouths about toppling the industry.

Magic Marker Doodles on a Corpse

If the person at the party isn't glassy-eyed at this point, more intent on making zen designs in the hummus with a carrot stick than listening to me, the next line of questioning is usually along the line of, "You seem reasonably intelligent. Why do you still listen to punk? I mean, isn't it dead?"

After a lot of soul searching, I came to admit that although I love punk rock, it's not the end-all, be-all of any music ever made. I've come around to listening to a lot of different types of music that I unashamedly enjoy. I just have an affinity for present-day underdogs and things that have been "killed off" a long time ago. We all have our quirks.

"Punk's not dead," has always seemed to be an extremely weird rallying cry. First off, it's merely a reaction to someone more powerful proclaiming that, "punk is dead." Let's unpack that, because the idea of a "killing a genre," is one of ownership. Those in the "music" industry (from artists to critics) helped foster punk's birth, so they feel they have the right—very strangely—to snuff it out of existence on their timetable, ignoring current evidence to the contrary.

I started to realize—even though I'd of have been the last to admit it at the time—that not all punk rock was good just because it was punk rock.

Here's where an essential enigma comes in, specifically, to punk music. Because no one's vehemently claiming that salsa's dead or reggae's dead, I actually like it when people who are critiquing culture say that punk died. They most often intend it in a way that's supposed to make the self-described punks of today feel invalid, obsolete, like time-wasting play actors, or pedophiles (what self-respecting forty-year-old would hang out with sweaty sixteen-year-olds in a dirty basement?). And by casting that aspersion, it raises the critic's own stock. They claim full ownership of the word, punk, what it meant, what it will ever come to mean. To me, this is largely rad. Let them make their echo chamber cocoons and baffling "punk documentaries." (Steven Blush's book, *American Hardcore*, is a perfect example of this curious, shitty behavior, and George Hurchalla's much superior *Going Underground* is the antidote.)

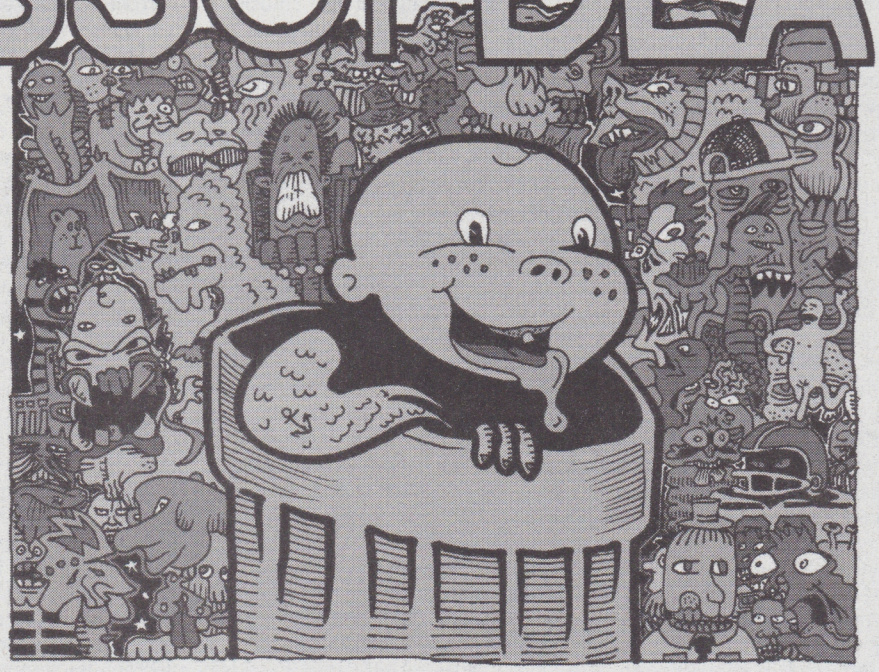
Do you know what people do with dead things? They largely leave them alone. Unless we develop a *Soilent Green* scenario or become a nation that suddenly green lights necrophilia, being considered dead, but still in the road, is pretty much a free pass to not be bothered by a bunch of "touristy"

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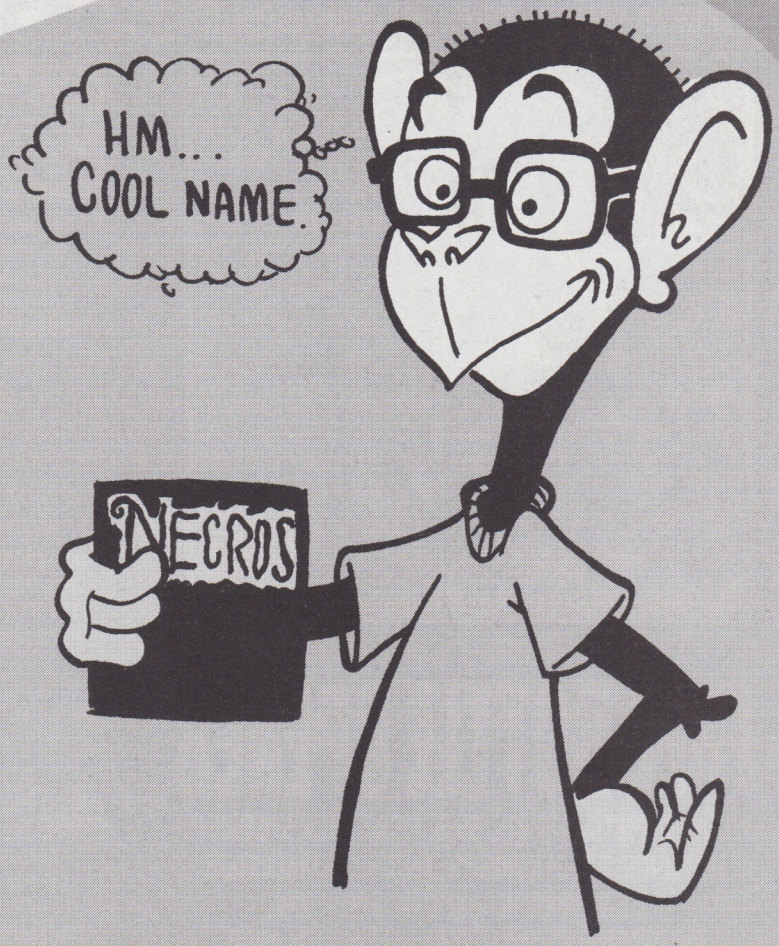
KISSOFDEATH

Critics most often intend to make the self-described punks of today feel invalid and obsolete, like time-wasting play actors, or pedophiles.

navigators. (Be it from larger media outlets or off-base academia attempting a quick harvest with an already prefigured thesis in their back pockets, evidence to the contrary be damned.) They leave DIY punks more to our own devices if they think the whole punk jalopy went kaput somewhere in 1982, came sputtering to life around 1993 again, blew a rod in 1997 or so, then became the Warped Tour. Current-day DIY punk's often just looked at as a roadkilled raccoon on the cultural interstate. Cool by me. It gives me more time to enjoy a nice bowl of ice cream and not to answer the phone to talk to a publicist trying to shill me on a band that's sponsored by an energy drink.

There's another method for the cyclical death and rebirth of punk on a national level, and it's as old as the gold standard. Hype the living hell out of any form of music if it's been "dead" longer than a fourteen-year-old's memory (which seems to be getting shorter and shorter all the time), pour obscene amounts of money into the enterprise, give it six months to a year and a half, then set plans for its public and critical crucifixion. It may be applicable to other genres, but with punk, the funny thing is that since it is often a visually distinct mode of expression—funny hair, ripped clothes, compulsive sneering, middle-digit-wagging—is that people's eyes fool them. With these "punks"—who are "punking it up" on national airwaves and often look like the heyday of CBGB's—if you shut your eyes and just listen…it's by and large teen pop that has much more in common with Pat Boone than Joey Ramone, more in common with Marie Osmond than Joan Jett. It's the opposite of "the emperor has no clothes." The difference between my long-term understanding punk and any other genre rebirthed by corporate-farm "punk" is that the visual aesthetic is the only thing that's revived. The emperor isn't naked. His admirers are deaf. Boo to that.

Yet punk stayed and is staying. Why? Because it's a sloppy, pukey, imperfect landmine of a term. It's also a larger term than any one definition. It's bigger than any rope that's been tied around its own neck. It's, literally, a lexicon devil. It's a faith-based enterprise. It can be pretty much agreed upon who the punk pioneers are: from the Ramones, The Clash, Sex Pistols, Iggy Pop, Weirdos, Damned, Minor Threat, Adolescents, Bad Brains, The Germs, Spontaneous Disgust, Crass, Zero Boys, and a whole glob of bands from the late '70s and the early '80s. Together, also imperfectly, they helped define and re-define the understanding of the term. Sure, there were variations, "defectors," and



so forth (Penelope Houston of the Avengers would publicly renounce punk, twirl around an oak tree in a skirt, then later return), but in the earlier days, people got the basic gist of punk and could usually pick the term out of lineup.

For instance:

Steely Dan, not punk. Avengers, punk.

Eagles, not punk. Bad Brains, punk.

Captain and Tenile, not punk. The Exploited, punk.

Today, the waters are much more muddy. People with larger megaphones and deeper pockets are always trying to steal it away when they smell money to be made.

Although it may seem like I'm talking shit here, I'm not. What happened to riot grrrl? Female empowerment, loud guitars, frank discussions on sexuality and gender issues, I'm all for it. These are on-going, pertinent issues. But, as a movement, it came, it saw, and it got ingested. Perhaps I'm missing out on a new wave of bands re-hoisting that banner; please let me know if I am. My two cents? Riot grrrl gave what they were doing a new name and that was its death. That newly minted name quickly became a brand. The privately owned enterprise grew rapidly. It "went public," then quickly got bought and sold like shares on the stock market. It grew exponentially fast and out of the hands of its creators. And, for whatever reason, a couple years later, the term got relegated to the 99 Cent Store of our nation's popular consciousness, right next to grunge and New Kids On The Block. That doesn't take the power away from Bikini Kill's *Reject All American*; it just provides a comparative contrast.

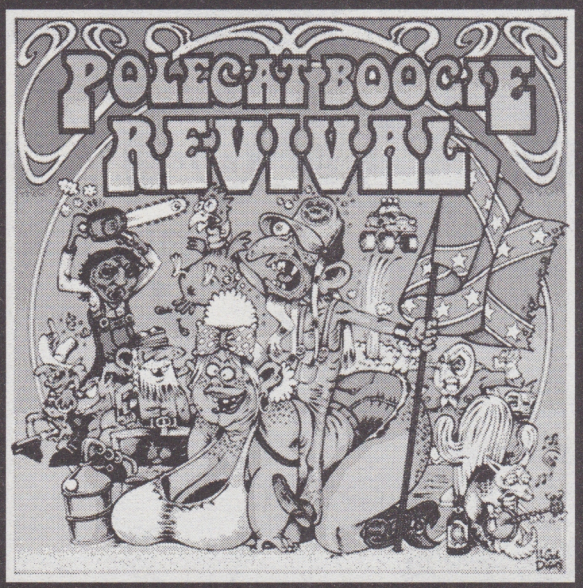
Back to today's underground. All I need for my validation is that I'm part of a worldwide network of friends. I know I'm not deluding myself. I don't need an endorsement from an article in a newspaper or an evening news spot on TV to tell me that the culture I'm involved in is relevant. Here's a secret: DIY punk rock never got killed off. Strains of it have been going strong, day in and day out, from 1977 to the present. People are

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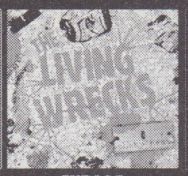
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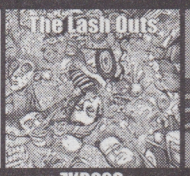




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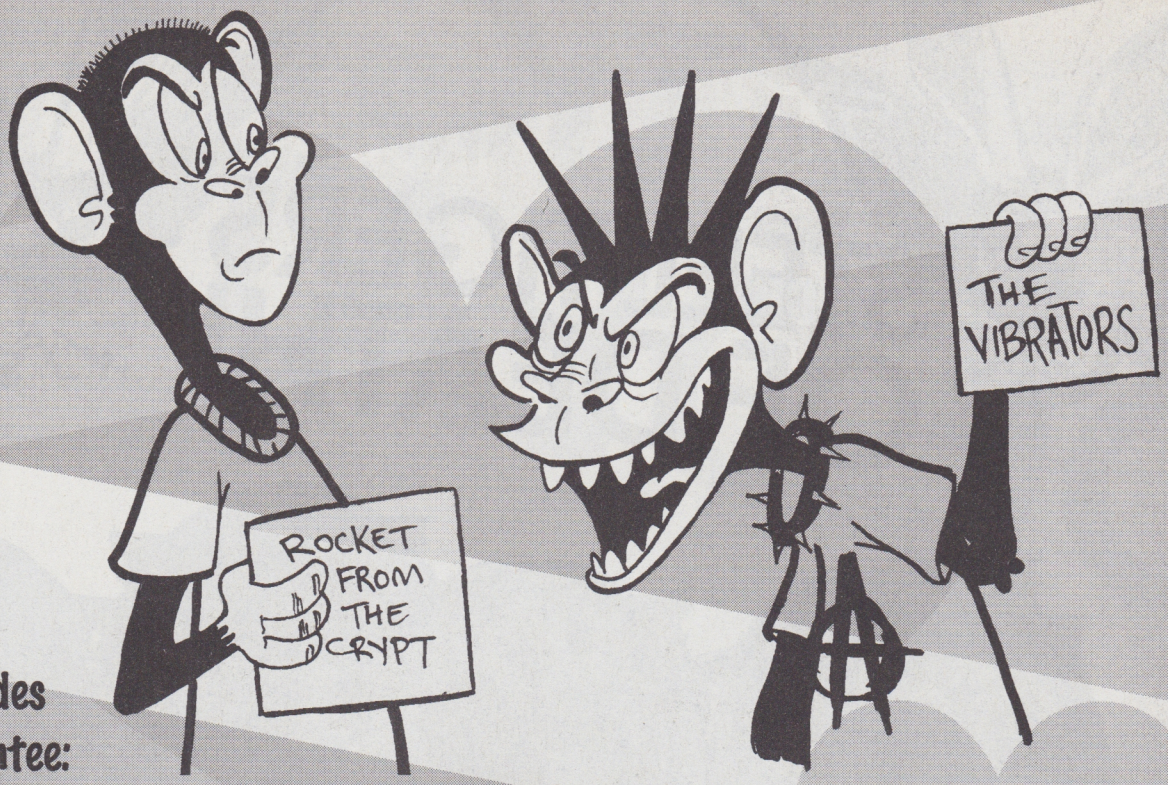


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Punk provides one guarantee: Get two punks in a room, give them enough time, and they'll eventually disagree with what is and isn't punk.

still voluntarily ascribing to it. New people "sign up" every single day. It's currently personified to me by bands like Tiltwheel, Dillinger Four, Toys That Kill, The Arrivals, and The Grabass Charlestons. Bands that have made a conscious choice over a long period of time, well past any concept of "economic feasibility," to keep "buying in" while remaining in relative obscurity and making some awesome music. There's no set course, no set "sound." DIY punk is a large, organic thing. Gladly so.

Celebration and Criticism

Back to the title. Why do I find it important to consider this piece "*One Punk's* Guide to…"? Why not "*The Punk Rocker's* Guide to…"? Punk provides one guarantee: get two punks in a room, give them enough time, and they'll eventually disagree with what is and isn't punk.

Here's why I've been hesitant to self-apply the punk rock label to myself. Over the years, I've come up with the following categories for punks who strangle the shit out of the music they're into. A.) Those who impose more and more rules about what's punk and what's not punk, which gets tedious. Umm, yeah. This is supposed to be fun and creative time, not rules-all-the-time, now-I'm-a-cop time. B.) Those who are constantly proving they're "more hardcore" almost invariably either burn out—and completely blip off the radar (usually after their index finger gets fatigued from pointing it at other people who hadn't lived up to their ideals)—or they straight jacket themselves into tighter and tighter, more restrictive subgenres (and will then complain that no good music is being made nowadays). The bitterest people I know have locked themselves inside of either 1977 or 1982 and will only be seen at reunion shows (which often feel like wakes to me). C.) Those who feel it necessary to flex their considerable knowledge of punk like Hacksaw Jim Duggan's 2"x 4". These elitists brandish "musical taste" like a homemade bat and are more than happy to whack at music fans who aren't already familiar with an (often awesome) obscurity. These geniuses usually start off with, "You must be living under a rock," when talking about a band that has never toured out of their home town area or have only released 300 copies of a record. All three types become absolutely no fun.

All that said, I'm glad for *some* of punk's restrictions. It gives our discussions a framework and focus. *Razorcake* isn't a golfing magazine. It's not a college course requirement for "resume punks." It's not full of cross-stitch patterns and nifty napkin folding ideas (Look! A goose!). I've also never viewed any of this as a popularity contest or a proxy for high school drama, but as a handshake to another culture. A little fuckin' diplomacy never hurt anyone, folks. Share the good stuff.

Philosophically, I'm a person who tries to find the good in things. In this day and age, it's too easy to base your life on negation. It's more of a challenge to not only express what you dislike, but articulate what you love. And here's where the opposite edges of the tortilla start to make a burrito: take old music, music that was around before this ultra-corporate media-consolidated world we live in. Some of it is really good. And fold that into DIY punk that is being made today: The Tim Version, The Swing Ding Amigos, The Reigning Sound, Leatherface, Riverboat Gamblers, Tragedy, The Chinese Telephones, Gorilla Angreb, The Marked Men, Fucked Up, and the list goes on and on. When these two get rolled up together, that's some of my favorite music ever.

Currently, I am working on a piece on the soul singer Otis Redding. Otis was a badass, and in ways I believe that both DIY punks as well as the general population can appreciate. In a time of segregation in the heart of the South, Otis's bands were of mixed races. In a time where most artists parlayed their song rights for the chance of stardom, Otis built his catalog from the ground up and smartly retained ownership of all that he wrote. Even when Otis's star rose, he always used local talent for his back-up bands. He never forgot who helped him ascend. And there's much more.

In this spirit of looking at other artists' biographies, ideals, and works, *Razorcake* plans on publishing a periodic series of "One Punk's Guide to…" We hope to examine these people—from wildly different times and places—through a lens, to show an interchange of ideas between then and now. I hope that, in some important ways, we can cross hidden cultural bridges which can help put context to what's going on in our lives today.

Stay tuned.

STEEL TIGERS OF DEATH!



THEY DRESS UP LIKE BOY SCOUTS, cat burglars, hula girls, and giant bunnies. They have alter egos: Remington Steel, El Tigre, Bradley Of, and Michael Deth. They like to make a victory lap, complete with high-fives, through the audience... before their set.

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SO WHO THE HELL ARE THESE UPSTARTS calling themselves Steel Tigers Of Death?

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HAILING FROM SEATTLE, the two-year-old band recently completed their second tour and released their third recording and first full-length, Steel Tigers Of Death Proudly Present Steel Tigers Of Death. Their real names, which bassist Bradley Of calls "the worst-kept secret in showbiz," are Jason Legat (drums), Morgan LaVigne (guitar, vocals), Brad Beshaw (bass, vocals), and Michael Grigg (guitar, vocals). Together, they make the freshest, most energetic, and possibly least pretentious band in Seattle. They're infusing the Seattle scene with a much-needed dose of comedy, from their lyrics to their penchant for appearing onstage in costume, which vary from the tame schoolboy look of suits and ties to full-body bunny suits.

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SO THE BAND IS FUNNY, YOU SAY, but does the music hold up? The rapid-fire delivery of their own concoction of punk-metal intensity, surprisingly catchy hooks, and disorienting time signatures belies their goofy persona. Their onstage presence is electrifying, from Legat's fierce and fearless drumming to Beshaw's manic flailing and cheeky mugging. Read on, as I delve into the truth behind the lowbrow hijinks of Steel Tigers Of Death.

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Interview by SARAH SHAY
Photos by LINDSAY PHILLIPS
Layout by DARYL GUSSIN

Sarah: Aren't you guys a little old for punk rock?
[Everyone laughs]
Brad: I am!
Morgan: You cannot ask that!
Sarah: But seriously. I'm assuming you were all in many bands in your wayward youths. How does this band compare?
Brad: Not wayward enough for me, really. I had a kind of clean-cut youth.
Morgan: I think we've all had the experience of being in bands that were really difficult, and I know one of the great things about this band was we all came into it wanting it to be really easy.
Mike: No one runs the band. It's like a co-op.
Brad: We were all kind of band Nazis in our bands before, so it's nice to be in a band where you don't have to do everything. Everybody writes songs, everybody books— well, Mike books the shows.
Morgan: Well, each to their own abilities.
Mike: Yeah, I can't play drums, so that's why Jason does.
Jason: And I'm a good driver.
Brad: You mentioned age earlier and whether it was a joke or not, I'm going to take it seriously. It's nice being in a band with thirty and [raises hand] forty-somethings because there's so much less stress. When you're in your twenties, you want to "make it." Now it's all for fun. It's something we do because we enjoy it, not because it's the means to an end.
Morgan: Especially because there's no chance for us to make it.
Brad: I didn't say that! Some dreams die hard. But it's not the main point. And make it as what?
Morgan: Yeah, make it in the huge multi-million dollar punk rock industry!
Brad: Some guys want to be an astronaut or a fireman, what does this band want to be when it grows up?
Mike: Well, we dress like firemen.
Sarah: Woah, I've never seen that. Do you guys have fireman costumes?
Brad: Sssssh!
Morgan: That would be even sweatier than the bunny suits.
Sarah: You guys could do a calendar!
Brad: Well, "The Men of Steel Tigers Of Death" calendar has always been a dream.
Sarah: Hey, why not? You could wear a different costume for every month!
Brad: Well, costumes above the waist. It's a calendar for the ladies.
Morgan: Here's us all working on a car!
Brad: Here's everybody fighting a fire… while Brad smokes. Here's everybody going into space…while Brad smokes.
Sarah: What is the Steel Tigers Of Death origin story?
Brad: Don't look at me, I wasn't even there! I was the latest bloomer.
Morgan: Didn't a bolt of lightning hit a rack of chemicals… no, a ring from outer space!
Sarah: Gamma rays.
Brad: This ape threw a bone and it hit Mike.
Jason: Then they let the ape play drums.
Mike: It started in my basement as me and a drum machine. I thought I could just do it by myself, so I was Steel Tigers Of Death.
Jason: Mike was Steel Tigers Of Death. It doesn't get any nerdier than that.
Mike: I knew Jason. We were in a band before called The Thuglife Baldwin, so he started playing drums and we were going to try Death From Above-type stuff where it's just drum and bass, but we could never get schedules to work right. We could put it off forever. Things kind of dwindled there.
Jason: Took about a year off.
Mike: Yeah, then Morgan moved to town and he was at a party. We started talking. He was our bass player at first.
Morgan: Which was terrible. I am a terrible bassist.
Mike: We did a few recordings and figured out that he needed to move up to guitar or something.
Brad: He got kicked upstairs.
Morgan: The strings are so big, and there are not enough of them!
Mike: And he knew Brad from Albuquerque.
Morgan: It was actually really good timing, because Brad was just closing his shop (Confounded Books & Magazines). I really didn't think you wanted to join the band, but I said we were looking for somebody; you were like, [waves hands wildly] "ooh, pick me!"
Brad: [Raises hand and squirms] "Put me in, coach! I'll play bass!"
Mike: So then that's the dream team.
Jason: Yeah, it worked out great right from the beginning.
Mike: We really started connecting, right away. We had some songs we'd been working on, some of which were done or started in my basement. We moved on from there and started playing this whole set. We recorded two months after Brad was in the band.
Morgan: We'd never even played out.
Brad: Yeah, we recorded our EP before we'd ever played a show.
Morgan: Lesson to young bands out there. Don't do that.
Brad: It's fun as a time capsule, maybe.
Morgan: Jason had the whooping cough the week we recorded that.
Sarah: I didn't know people still had that.
Brad: Yeah, he had it right after he had rickets.
Morgan: And then the consumption came on.
Jason: Scurvy was a killer.
Morgan: Let's not talk about the gout.
Brad: We've got him on a regimen of more fruits, so the scurvy won't come back.
Morgan: Cod liver oil and Epsom salts.
Sarah: Going back in time again, do you guys have similar musical backgrounds?
Mike: They're kind of different. These guys (Morgan and Brad), they know everything from the '80s.
Brad: Well, it may have something to do with our *ages*—and also our location, because we both grew up on the East Coast.
Morgan: Brad and I both came out of the old school East Coast punk scene, which kind of morphed into the East Coast art punk rock scene. And these guys came from full-on Midwest, West Coast vibes. I think that we have very different specializations, but we have very similar philosophies about music. We all have a DIY thing. We appreciate anything that's done with a little bit of intelligence and a lot of art.
Sarah: Just a little intelligence.
Morgan: [Laughs] It doesn't take much to push you out from the crowd. That's the sad part.
Sarah: Your CD is coming out soon, and there were some delays in getting it out. Were you trying to get it just perfect, or did something specific hold it up?
Mike: Oh yeah, we were fine tuning it.
Morgan: Absolutely.
Brad: Well, Morgan was trying to make it perfect and we kept sabotaging it, and making it less perfect. He'd make it perfect, and we'd make it less perfect, and then he'd make it perfect… finally we stopped bugging him. Now it's *perfect.*
Mike: We recorded it last August. We played a lot of shows and just never put it into the foreground as something we needed to do.
Morgan: It's just weird time for music. There was a lot of arguments—well, not arguments, but discussions—about what format we were going to put it out on. We started approaching labels and a lot of the questions that come up with that are like, "Why do we need a label?" There's definitely a lot of things a label could help us with, which would be great to take the burden off, but it's not as essential as it used to be. Plus they're not going to feature us on *One Tree Hill* any time soon, so I don't think any record labels are looking at us and going, "Ooh, these guys are really gonna take off!"
Sarah: Well, you never know.
Brad: No, I know. I don't even—what is *One Tree Hill*?
Sarah: So how do you feel about the outcome?
Mike: It's crazy, because we've been listening to it for months and now it's finally coming out. It's going to be released and some of these songs nobody's heard but us.
Morgan: It's also weird, when you have that long of a delay, because we play a lot of that stuff really differently now.
Jason: And a lot slower.
[All laugh]
Brad: That's drummer's humor! *Fast* drummer's humor.
Jason: [Rimshot]
Brad: Yeah, transcribe that!
Sarah: I think "ba-dum tss" is the official transcription.
Morgan: Let's see if we get a spit-take in here, too.
Brad: [Blows a raspberry] Ppppbpbpbpbpbpbpbpbpbpbbbpppt!
Morgan: [Makes generally goofy, hard-to-transcribe noises] Whhhhaaaaaaaat?
Mike: Aaaaaand we lost 'em.
Brad: Hey, that's what happens when you put the nerds next to each other.
Mike: We're just glad to have the album out, finally. It's weird because we're putting it out

right before we go on this weeklong mini-tour. It's a lot of hard work putting out this album right as we're heading out the door.

Jason: And we're really excited about the art on the album, too.

Mike: We had our friend Chip Baker do the art for the album and signs for the tour, and it was hard to narrow it down to one image.

Brad: Yeah, he literally brought a stack, maybe an inch thick, of doodles and drawings.

Morgan: If we were cheap bastards, we could mine that for the rest of our career.

Brad: We kind of *have* been, for different flyers and the inside art and everything. We're digging deep into the Chip mine.

Morgan: He's a really great print artist, and working with him has been really exciting. It's hilarious and seriously cool.

Sarah: Are you guys looking forward to the mini-tour?

Brad: Ten shows, ten days, with ten-hour drives between each one. The 10-10-10 tour!

Morgan: So, going back to our age? We're dead.

Brad: I think these guys (Mike and Morgan, who are graphic designers) might die. The guys who sit down for a living might die.

Morgan: The last show is Boise, Idaho, and I'm fully expecting to be the Steel Tigers Of Shredded Cheese by the time we get there. That's going to be the show to go to.

Mike: We'll be an instrumental band by then.

Brad: Yeah, Morgan won't have any voice left, and Jason will be playing every song at absolute warp speed with no room for notes.

Morgan: I think my neighbors think I'm beating my dog, because I get up every morning and get in the shower and scream my head off just so I can get ready for the tour.

Sarah: How did your first tour go last summer?

Brad: Awesome. I mean, any time any band tours for the first time it's usually a nightmare: half of the shows fall through, etc., etc. You really find out then whether you can relate to the guys in your band. When you practice, it's two days a week, two hours for practice, big deal. You play a show and it's hanging out in your own town, but when you get in a van and travel for ten hours a day, then play a show and then get back in the van, then you realize "this is great" or "this sucks, I want to go home." And it was excellent.

Mike: Great shows, met a lot of cool people, played with some great bands.

Morgan: When you're an unknown band on your first tour, you're going to eat some shit, that's just how it goes.

Brad: And you have to, and you should.

Morgan: Absolutely, but people were really supportive. When we had a bad shows, bartenders would sit us down and tell us who to talk to to not have that happen again.

Mike: The assisted living places we played at were the best.

Morgan: Yeah, I personally liked the bookmobile gigs. The kids were great.

Brad: Oh please, I wish!

Morgan: I gotta say, Vegas still stands out.

Mike: Oh yeah.

Morgan: The punk rock bar there is really great, but you'd never know it.

Brad: We'd talked to people here about The Double Down and they said, "Oh yeah, it's great," and then we get there… Pulling into Vegas and seeing your first tour band's name in lights right off the Strip, on the marquee? Nice!

Jason: We drove fourteen hours that day from San Francisco to Vegas, so pulling into town and seeing that was awesome.

Brad: Almost as awesome as the blowjob in the bathroom I had to endure.

[Everyone pauses]

Brad: Not me getting one!

Jason: No, he had to give one so we could get gas money.

Brad: No, I watched the tail end of one while trying to wait in line to pee, which is what the bathroom is for!

Sarah: Not in Vegas

Sarah: How did the costumes work out on tour?

Brad: [Laughs] Exceptionally smelly, especially the onesies, the mechanic suits.

Morgan: Obviously, we can't bring our full wardrobe.

Brad: Or maybe we should borrow your washboard! (Interviewer's note: I do in fact play the washboard). We'll find a mountain stream in Denver and clean out our rabbit suits.

Morgan: Yeah, we're talking about bringing the rabbit suits on the tour.

Mike: They are so hot. I mean sexy!

Morgan: When we played down at The Zoo Tavern, there's no backstage or anything, so we all go into the men's room to change into our bunny suits, and this guy walks in and he's like, "What the hell?"

Mike: He was so startled, he had no idea.

Morgan: That's got to be a terrifying experience.

Brad: I think even better than the "what the hell?" guy were the guys who came in and were like, "C…cool?" They were still sussing it out, like, "Is this cool? I'll wait to see how my friends react to it."

Morgan: I keep thinking about the Hunter S. Thompson thing—for the rest of their lives they are going to think there's rooms of guys getting into bunny costumes, having a much better time than they could ever dream of.

Mike: They didn't even know a band was playing that night.

Jason: Then we went up on stage and nothing worked. Playing in a bunny suit is one thing…

Mike: We did a victory lap around the whole crowd, high-fiving everybody, and then we get onstage and nothing works.



Brad: And we always thought that doing the victory lap first was the greatest idea, but that time it came back and bit us.
Morgan: It's only great if you don't suck right after.
Mike: And then they're all embarrassed for you.
Brad: The crickets kick in, chirp chirp.
Sarah: I thought after last year's Easter show (in which Mike wore a bunny suit and almost passed out) you wouldn't want to do the bunny suits again. Didn't that nearly kill you?
Brad: Well, I went out and got a bunny-bonnet with ears specially made.
Morgan: He's very proud of his specially made bunny hat.
Brad: I am! Who wouldn't be? It's a lot more comfortable. On the day of the show, I had just turned forty, and the first thing I spent money on was two hundred dollars on a couple of bunny suits. And I just thought, "This is so great!" If teenage-me could look forward in time and see forty-year-old-me spending two hundred dollars on white bunny suits to play a show in, he'd be pretty psyched. That made my fortieth birthday. That was pretty much my mid-life crisis.
Mike: And it inspired a song.
Brad: Right, and a song came out of that, called "Teenage Me."
Sarah: Whose idea was it to wear costumes?
Morgan: It was Mike's.
Brad: Well…
Morgan: No, it was Mike.
Mike: I had this idea of people dictating what we'd wear.
Brad: But that came after, because I was telling you guys that I used to dress up in my former bands.
Morgan: No, because he brought it up before you were in the band.
Brad: Ah, I knew you were going to trump me! But I remember having a conversation about dressing up and somebody was against it.
Morgan: Yeah, me.
[All laugh]
Mike: Now it's kind of come back to bite us in the ass.
Morgan: It's come back to bite *you* in the ass, because now I'm like, "Let's take all our clothes off and paint ourselves green!"
Brad: There have been a few costumes that did not fly. I don't like having anything covering my face, like a pantyho.
Jason: Or a ski mask.
Brad: They got all full of spit. The ski masks were okay, but the pantyhose were bad.
Mike: No, they weren't.
Brad: Okay, well I'll wear the pantyhose if you take off your shirt! Mike doesn't like taking off his shirt.
Sarah: I feel like we're playing a really weird drinking game.
Morgan: Essentially, being in Steel Tigers Of Death is one long game of Truth or Dare.
Brad: Yeah, I dare you to wear a bunny suit if I wear a pantyho on my head.
Mike: One pantyho?
Brad: I've become completely enamored with the singular form of pantyhose: pantyho!
Sarah: What other costumes didn't work?
Brad: When we all dressed up as Mike!
Jason: Mike's idea that we all dress up as bank robbers.
Morgan: We had striped shirts on, and we made these stupid little masks out of black cloth. We were trying to look like Monty Python bank robbers with swag bags. Within twenty seconds it just looked like we were a bunch of idiots with black things around our necks and stained striped shirts. "Maybe they're French? I dunno."
Brad: It did not work.
Morgan: The biggest reversal was the cowboys. I was not into dressing like cowboys.
Brad: I was into it, I had overalls on!
Mike: I liked being the cowboys! I think that's going on tour. We're playing in Colorado, boys!
Brad: We can't bring that many things!
Sarah: I've noticed you guys get compared to Rocket From The Crypt most often.
Morgan: Good!
Sarah: Do you think that's accurate?
Mike: I would fucking pray for that. We love Swami, anything Swami puts out.
Morgan: Yeah, I love Swami bands. Swami's fucking awesome, and Rocket From The Crypt's one of the best bands ever. I'm a huge fan of anything John Reis does.
Mike: Anything John Reis-related. We're all huge fans, I think. Brad?
Brad: Oh yeah! I was just wondering if I should step on Morgan's feet and use the awesome thing he said in another interview. "Yeah, they compare us. They say, 'Compared to Rocket From the Crypt, they suck!'"
Mike: I think we do try to emulate some of their live stuff. There's no way we could really do that, but we love going from one song directly into the next, so you have just this wall of sound in front of you.
Brad: But of course, it's not just them.
Jason: Yeah, but I think they perfected it.
Brad: That's funny, because I've seen them a couple of times and I always associate that with bands other than them. The Drags used to do that, and Scared Of Chaka. Boom, boom, boom, then talk, then boom, boom, boom, boom, boom.
Morgan: At least for me, I feel that Rocket From The Crypt really gifted us, in terms of songwriting, with their ability to do a whole variety of stuff and still sound like them. You don't get the idea that they ever said, "Oh, that's not a Rocket From The Crypt song, we can't do that song." Whatever came up, they made it theirs. I think that's awesome.

WE'RE EXPERIMENTAL ANIMALS...



Brad: With us, that's the way it has to be. We've got three people with different sensibilities writing songs.
Mike: And singing them.
Brad: Each person, Mike, Morgan, and myself, brings the kernel of a song to practice, and then...
Jason: I pop it.
Morgan: We're all super into contributing and being contributed to, which is the best thing about being in this band. Everybody's open to suggestion.
Brad: It's the first time I've ever done it. I didn't know if I'd be able to collaborate or not. It's not always easy. There've been a few times when I was like, "Grr!"
Jason: "I won't try that!"
Brad: I WILL not try that!
Sarah: I do not like green eggs and this song idea.
Brad: This song should not have green eggs in it! Then a couple practices later, it's, "Hey, green eggs are okay in this song." And it's really fun to watch a song that you worked on in your head turn into another animal with input from three other members, and it takes on a life of its own. Like any piece that you're writing or drawing or painting, it becomes its own entity, and I like that.
Morgan: I always laugh about this now, but "Joey Binary" is one of our fastest songs, and when I brought it in, it was this total crappy blues jam. It really sucked, and we played around with it for a month before anything happened.
Jason: We continually mess around with our songs, even ones we've been playing for two years.
Brad: Which is why records are fun, but they are static. Looking back at even the one that's about to come out, we say, "Wow, we don't play it like *that* anymore."
Morgan: But that's good.
Brad: Oh, it's definitely good.
Mike: Evolution.
Brad: Or revolution.
Mike: Devolution.
Morgan: Especially because it makes every show a unique experience for people coming to see us. I think a lot of the changes maybe aren't obvious to the casual listener, and it's natural for any band that songs are different every time you play them. For us, though, we're constantly trying to find what works better. We're experimental animals, I guess.
Sarah: Hey, Experimental Tigers. That would be a good name for a band.
Brad: Yeah, animal names have become a bit ubiquitous, huh?
Morgan: Thank god we didn't do something with snakes. Or wolves.
Brad: Snake Tiger Snake Tiger Snake Tiger Snake.
Sarah: Hey, I think that's actually a band on Vagrant.
Morgan: Wolfy McSnake?
Mike: Wolfsnakemother?
Sarah: What band for each of you is the most influential, but comes through the least in your music?
Morgan: Wow, that's a hard one… because there are definitely bands that I flat-out try to imitate. I listen to a lot of experimental jazz, so I would say Gutbucket. We don't do anything even vaguely like them, but I find them really inspirational.
Brad: Devo would be one for me. I'm a Devo fan from way, way, way, way back.
Mike: I think that comes through…
Brad: Well, some parts are a little herky-jerky…
Mike: Even though Jason tries to suppress it.
Brad: I don't think we sound like them, but they had a uniform flavor and style that were all their own, and great stage presence. Just the epitome of what's fun in rock and roll, for me. I always think, "What would Devo do?"
Mike: I would say all the stuff that I do DJing. All '80s, super cheesy stuff, but some of it is so fuckin' rad. Old Billy Joel stuff, *Glass Houses*…
Brad: Oh god…
Mike: I mean, Huey Lewis And The News? That would never come through in our music, but it's fun spinning that stuff on records. Just good '80s pop.
Morgan: And we do touch on it sometimes. We cover Echo & The Bunnymen.
Mike: And we're working on a Go-Go's song.
Brad: I like to ask, "What would Journey *not* do." There's probably not a band I hate more than Journey. That's the soundtrack to me getting my ass kicked in high school by meatheads.
Morgan: Well, Jason?
Jason: For a genre I listen to the most that we don't sound like at all, I'd say reggae. I do like reggae.
Brad: Which is funny, because I *hate* it.
Jason: It's just so basic and slow and deep. It's different. And I really like 1920s swing, crooners with the deep, deep voices. Just kind of slow, no high-end.
Morgan: It's funny that you say crooners, because I was just listening to Chet Baker this morning, and that's all high-end.
Mike: I'd also say old country, like Patsy Cline or Johnny Paycheck.
Brad: Marty Robbins.
Mike: Trucking music. I love that stuff.
Morgan: Well, there's a lot of stuff we love. I'm trying to think of stuff that influences my writing.
Brad: Influences without influencing. For direct influences, there's tons for all of us.
Morgan: NoMeansNo. Pretty much every song I've ever written is trying to be a NoMeansNo song.
Brad: And all of the bands I went to see live when I was a kid, mostly local Jersey hardcore bands. Adrenalin Overdose, I was in love with those guys. I thought they were the funniest, coolest band. I rode in their van and went to a White Castle. That was one of the highlights of my youth.
Morgan: [Makes cock-sucking noises.]
Brad: God, can I finally put this rumor to rest? No, I did not suck off Bruce Wingate from Adrenalin Overdose.
Morgan: I'm a little disappointed.
Brad: Hey, I loved him in a manly way.
Morgan: Yeah, back then when guys did things alone together it wasn't gay, it was just a couple of guys, hanging out.
Brad: Yeah, back in olden times, before they had "The Gay." But we all have different influences. I think that's one of the cool things. We all agree on Rocket From The Crypt, but I think we all have a different idea of what we sound like, which is kind of cool.
Mike: Our sound is a collection of everybody's likes. I know Morgan doesn't like some of the stuff I listen to constantly, and Jason listens to '90s shit-rock…
[Everyone laughs]
Brad: That's a nice way to put it!
Morgan: And these guys (Mike and Jason) go on big "adventure metal" binges. The interesting thing is the way that other people pull stuff out of your stuff that you didn't know was there. Brad might come in with something and say, "Hey, this is kind of hooky," and I'll go, "Yeah, but if this was a NoMeansNo song, it would sound like this!" That's when it's really good. I'll bring something in that I think sounds like a jar of nails rolling down a hill, but they'll say, "Yeah, but it has this really poppy side to it." It's exciting to be in a band like that, because you get to play genres that you didn't think you were necessarily good at. There are moments when we're playing and I'll think, "Hey mom, I'm in a mathrock band!" Or we're doing something super poppy and I'm like, "Aw, this is so catchy…I love it!" I love Brad's new song. I can't remember the last time I said, "Oh-wah-oh."
Brad: Basically the whole reason I joined the band was to get him to say "oh-wah-oh." My mission is complete.

ESSENTIALLY, BEING IN STEEL TIGERS OF DEATH IS ONE LONG GAME OF TRUTH OR DARE.



Sarah: What's your favorite album you discovered in '08?
Jason: The Android Hero demo is my favorite.
Brad: Aw man, I was gonna say Android Hero!
Morgan: As far as local bands go, that's the one I feel challenged by. When I hear them I say, "Fuck, we gotta get our game going."
Brad: Android Hero has sort of thrown down the gauntlet.
Morgan: The new Nick Cave album is completely dominating my life right now. I know a lot of people loved his foray into long, slow love songs, and that's fine, but his last few albums have been making me so goddamned happy, I jump up and down every time I listen to them.
Mike: I've been listening to Nightmarchers on repeat. It's great to hear that sound evolving, taking it in a slightly new direction from the Rocket sound.
Morgan: We just went to see them live, and I have to say they're a band that doesn't quite come through on the record. I mean I enjoyed it, but I don't think I was accessing it in quite the right way until I saw them live.
Brad: I have had the Dirtbombs song "The Sweetest Kittens Have the Sharpest Claws" on repeat on my CD player. When I got back from the park today, a yellowjacket somehow got into my shirt and stung me twice, and I barely noticed. I was jumping around and I went, "Hey, did I just poke myself? Oh well, woohoo! Damn, I did it again!" All of the sudden this dead yellowjacket falls out of my shirt. I think that says something about a song.
Morgan: Last year, one of the big highlights for me was shaking Mick Collin's (from The Dirtbombs) hand.
Brad: But did you gain his powers?
Morgan: God knows I tried.
Jason: The new Constantines record is really cool.
Brad: Okay, we've reached the limit of me not having a cigarette. Feel free to trash talk while I'm gone.
Morgan: So, we're looking for a new bass player…
Sarah: Well, I've never played bass, but I'll give it a shot! I don't smoke.
Mike, Morgan: You're in!
Morgan: Oh yeah, I just got the new Breeders album, that's good.
Mike: And the new Portishead. I know everyone loves it, but you can tell they've been working on these songs a long time, just ripped them apart and put in the most simple things that make it really successful… Did we tell you we're starting a label? Mustard Pack Records.
Mike: Yeah, we're starting a label. Where can people submit stuff?
Morgan: Submissions at mustardpack.com. I'll set it up tonight when I get home!
Mike: Yeah, we just decided it would be easier to put it out ourselves.
Jason: As soon as we get that robot to replace Brad, we'll be set.
Morgan: We're talking to Android Hero about doing some split singles. We're not exactly tied into any big distribution circuits, so I don't know how that's going to work.
Mike: Except for the information superhighway.
Brad: Yes, we're the unofficial on-ramp.
Mike: The interwebs.
Morgan: We have mastered the tubes.

NEW MODEL ARMY

TRIBAL WARFARE AND LIBERAL CIVILIZATION

INTERVIEW BY ALLAN MACINNIS

PHOTOS BY FEMKE VAN DELFT

GRAPHIC DESIGN BY ALBERT LAM

My first encounter with the New Model Army was around 1985 when the band was still a trio, comprised of Justin Sullivan, Stuart Morrow, and drummer Robert Heaton (who, sadly, died in 2004). A local cable access late night TV show, *Soundproof*, played a clip of the U.K. band doing "No Rest" live and it made quite an impression. The song was a plea of bad conscience and frustration, angrily petitioning god to explain what evil the band had done, that they should be so sleepless and tormented. Singer/guitarist/main songwriter Sullivan—performing under the moniker Slade the Leveller—was a skinny, longhaired, gap-toothed character dressed in what appeared to be sweaty burlap; he looked like nothing so much as a pirate, and a low-ranking one at that, but he performed with a degree of passion that was intimidating as all hell to witness—like someone who lived more intensely than any thousand others around him, roaring out the lyrics with a fire in his eyes. Joolz Denby—punk poet, novelist, and the artist who has done the cover art for most New Model Army albums—was also on *Soundproof* around the same time to show off her various tattoos. She seemed very smart, kind of angry and equally intimidating in her intensity, which came through most when she read her poetry.

These short clips made a huge impression on me: I bought everything I could find from the band. Over the next couple of years, I acquired LPs of *Vengeance*, *No Rest*, *The Ghost of Cain*, and Joolz' 12", *Love Is*, with the NMA on backup. The lyrics were a sort of food for the soul, something to keep me alive through my suburban adolescence. "Why is everybody so frightened," indeed? What to make of the fact that I, too, felt better than everybody around me? Was small-town England really so similar to Maple Ridge? I was jealous of the fierce love that passed between Sullivan and the object of his affections in "Poison Street," and troubled by the vigilantism advocated in "Vengeance" and "The Hunt"—but I felt more alive listening to their songs—stronger, fortified, grateful to be less alone.

Lack of a car or a buddy to drive me—and, I admit, a certain degree of intimidation— prevented me from seeing the one 1980s Vancouver show I had a chance to get to, at the Town Pump. Not enough tickets had sold and the band had elected to open it up to free attendance, rather than cancelling, a move of considerable generosity and wisdom; it's one of those few concerts that I still kick myself for having missed. I wouldn't see the full force of the New Model Army onstage until the spring of 2008, when the group—now a five-piece with Sullivan as the only original member—played Seattle, seeming, if anything, more intense than in the early footage I'd seen. The Seattle show gave me a taste of what I've been missing, and I'm ready for more anytime.

Justin Sullivan and I spoke as he drove from his home base of Bradford to London.



Allan: I gather there's a large Muslim community in Bradford. Your song "One of the Chosen," I assume is about Islamic fundamentalism. Has there been a reaction from the Muslim community?

Justin: Strangely enough, it's *not* written about the Muslim community at all. It was a lyric I wrote a long time ago. It was written about a fundamentalist Christian group. When I was a kid, I used to religion-hop a lot, among all sorts of different religions, and I remember the glory of just surrendering yourself to some great truth. And being right: "We're right, everybody else is wrong"—that kind of thing. But it applies quite well to fundamentalist *anything*.

I'm from a religious background. By the time I got to about nineteen, I'd been through quite a few religions, and what I had worked out quite early in my life was that they were all the same. And there's kind of a mystical element to all of them, which is about light and truth, and not about words. So in Islam, it's the Sufi element, which is not really interested the words or the deeds of Mohammed; it's interested in the mystical idea of god. I was brought up as a Quaker, which is kind of the same idea, and the Qabbala is a bit like that.

They're all the same at the top end, once you get past the, "We're right and everybody else is wrong." The thing about the religions of the book, and, up to a point, the other great religions of the world, is that they're all *cults*, and the reason that they survive is that they've got a built-in hostility to outsiders. So in Christianity, it's the book that's written sometime afterwards, Revelations, that is the "sting in the tail" of Christianity. Christianity is all about love and truth and light and beauty, and then there's: if you don't join us, you're in trouble. That's also written into Islam, because Mohammed had to protect his little cult from attacks from the outside. The reason these religions survive is because they have this protection mechanism from outside attack. Therefore they're all equally capable of hostility. But that's why they've survived, the great world religions. Probably much more enlightened small cults die out.... The thing about "One of the Chosen," it's not a criticism.

Allan: No, it's extremely sympathetic.

Justin: Yeah, it's about how good it feels.

Allan: That's something that really interests me about the New Model Army. A lot of punk bands—not that you're technically a punk band—are really openly and overtly hostile towards religion; but you've always had a more complex view of things, talking about what the world is like "now that we've killed God," in "Drag It Down."

Justin: I'm pretty ambivalent about everything. When it comes to lyrics, I reserve the right to write about anything. We started in the early '80s, and there were these rumors about this red-hot socialist band coming out of Bradford: "the New Model Army. Really left wing." Then the first thing we released was "Vengeance" (a song about taking vigilante action, if necessary, to punish the guilty, from people who push drugs on teenagers, to escaped Nazis). It confused the fuck out of everyone, because it's the most politically incorrect song ever written by anyone! I remember we were completely disowned by the left because we wrote that song. Later on, we wrote a song called "My People Right or Wrong," which is very sympathetic to a kind of nasty nationalism, in a way. But I reserve the right to write songs about *feelings*: not about what's right and wrong. One journalist once told me that all his fellow journalists in London were utterly terrified to say they liked us because they didn't know what we were going to say next week. I don't think any artist can have a higher accolade than that, can they?

Allan: [laughs] No! It's great praise... Coming back to religion: is Neopaganism something you've explored?

Justin: By instincts, I'm a pagan. The idea of god or the other is entirely part of my life. It seems so obvious to me that there is a whole other level of things going on simultaneously to the material world. I don't really question it, and I don't really have to do anything about it. To me, god is nature and nature is god, and we're part of nature, therefore we're part of god. It's all one and the same. If I had to name what I believe, it would probably be paganism. But I don't feel the need to join any groups, you know what I mean?

AS A WRITER, I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO WRITE ABOUT ANYTHING THAT I FIND INTERESTING.

Allan: Do you feel the need for any sort of religious practice?

Justin: I go to Quaker meetings sometimes. You go in on a Sunday morning and you sit in silence for an hour, and that's it. If anyone at all is moved to speak—about anything at all—they just get up and say something. Then somebody else can speak, but it's understood that there has to be at least four or five minutes silence before anyone else can speak. That's the only rule. A shared silence between people is a pretty rare thing in the twenty-first century. I kind of like it.

Allan: Is there a Quaker church?

Justin: Meetings. Quaker meetings. I did go there when I was a kid sometimes. The whole thing about Quakerism is, specifically, you're not allowed to proselytize. I'm probably breaking the rules now! Neither are you allowed to favor Quakers over non-Quakers. It's basically sort of a universalist cult.

Allan: How do people get involved?

Justin: They hear about it, go there, and think, "Yeah, this makes sense." Its roots are the same roots as those of the English Civil War



(the New Model Army takes its name from the revolutionary army of Oliver Cromwell in that conflict). Basically, the king was head of the church, and they killed the king. You have to remember that in the seventeenth century, religion and politics were very tied up, rather like a lot of what's going on in the Islamic world at this moment. The scene was dominated by Presbyterians, who said, "Well, there you have it. The word of god is in the bible. Therefore you do what's in the bible, no questions asked." And then you have some preachers who interpret the word of god for you. And then along came this guy called George Fox who said, "Oh, no, there's a part of god in every person, and you have to become quiet and listen to the part of god that's in yourself. And it's your conscience, and if you become quiet and you listen to your conscience, that will guide you in the right way through the world. When you meet other people, you're meant to meet the part of god in them, rather than whatever they appear to be saying." And obviously they were persecuted very heavily in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I'm very interested in it, and it's part of my life, without being a dominating part. But no one has ever written as unQuakerly a song as "Vengeance," the "Hunt," or "Here Comes the War."

Allan: At various points, you've pulled "Vengeance" from the set, and the band hasn't played it since 9/11. Or has that changed?

Justin: We did once on a particular occasion. I was doing an acoustic show with Michael and Dean from the band, and we were in a small town. Right opposite the gig was an openly Nazi regalia shop, run by Nazi skinheads. We played the song, and we went and did vast amounts of physical damage to the shop after the gig. We played the song that night. I think the song is really about how justice needs to be done, but having said that, the world is so full of people screaming for vengeance at the moment that, generally speaking, I don't feel the need to add my voice.

I haven't said we'll never play it again. I think, as an artist, you always have to be true to yourself, and there are moments when you really want to do something. It may not fit into your political philosophy, but it's emotionally true. The point about music is that it's not about philosophy, it's about emotions.

Allan: Right, although you have very intelligent lyrics…

Justin: What I try very hard to do is not to write about myself. It's not all my views. The character in "One of the Chosen" is not me. Well, it could be me—but it's anybody, in that particular situation.

Allan: You've said that you've written songs based on interviews with other people, capturing other people's feelings in your songs.

Justin: The song called "Breathing," on *High*, is written about someone who was very close to the band, who was on the next door carriage to one of the ones who was blown up on the subway in London two years ago. "Breathing" was pretty much word for word what she told me when I asked her.

Allan: How has that been received?

Justin: By her, okay! By everybody else, okay. A lot of people haven't got a clue what it's about. Sometimes you put a song into the public domain and people read it completely differently from what you intended, but I don't mind that either.

Allan: Is there an example of that?

Justin: "Ghost of Your Father." It was written about somebody else and his relationship with his father as I understood it. And everybody has interpreted it in their own way, according to their relationship with their own father.

Allan: "One of the Chosen" could also apply to a terrorist cell or something.

Justin: Yeah. So could "The Attack." Again, it's told from the inside, told about how exciting this feels.

Allan: Have you ever been really politically involved? In the song "You Weren't There," off *Eight*, you talk about "walking arm in arm in the sun..."

Justin: Yeah, I quite like doing that sort of thing.

YEAH, I THINK PEOPLE ARE PRETTY AMAZING. OUR CAPABILITIES ARE PRETTY AMAZING. WE'RE CLEVER MONKEYS.

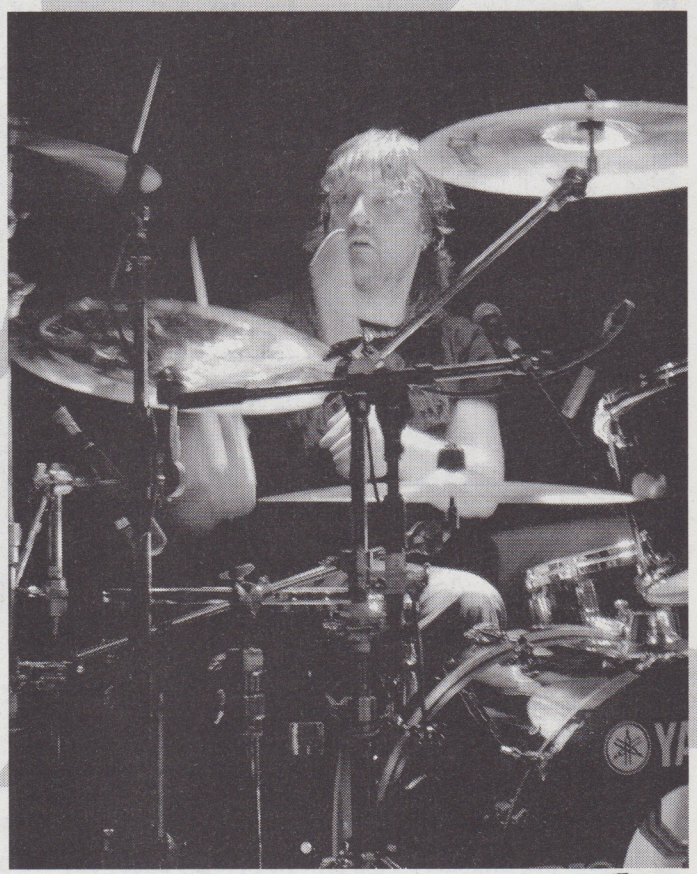
Allan: Going to demonstrations?
Justin: I think it just feels better than throwing bricks at the television in your living room. You go out and you realize that you're not alone in your fury at the government, or whatever it is. The most famous example being the anti-war demonstrations in London just before the Iraq war. Over one million people went. It's a kind of strengthening thing. I don't think it changes anything, except, in the end, that it gives you a sense of strength. You're not isolated. You're among other people who feel the same way.
Allan: I think that's the draw. In terms of music, how do you feel about groups that advocate a sort of aggressive activism, say—Crass, for example?
Justin: I've been involved in aggressive activism. In various situations. However, I never kind of liked the Crass thing. There are two or three things I just don't go along with. The whole anarchy thing: there have been plenty of periods of anarchy in history, and they've invariably been followed by military dictatorships. Anarchy sounds lovely when you're young and fit and male and strong, but when you're pregnant or old or vulnerable in various ways, it's not quite a great idea. You don't feel so secure.

The anarchists have got their lovely dream, and it's a lovely dream, but it hasn't worked, because people are people. My next reservation is that one of the things about Crass was—like a lot of modern art—deliberately confrontational and ugly. Their argument would be that the world is ugly and they're displaying the world as it is, without the filter of television or something to make it appear other than it is. But I disagree that the world is ugly and that people are ugly. I can see that point of view completely, but I'm basically, by nature, a romantic. I think that if the world is ugly, why not put something beautiful into it? And I think that New Model Army treads that strange line: it's very direct, and it's quite angry, and it's quite emotionally blunt, sometimes—passionate. But it's never ugly. If you take "High," or even "Into the Wind"—they're quite bitter, but in a way, musically beautiful, musically romantic.

The third thing about Crass and that whole politico-punk thing is that they believe in their philosophy, and the music is there as a background to put across the philosophy. If you do that, you've got one album where you lay it out, and that's it. Why go on? I don't believe that music should be used as a background for anything. I think New Model Army exists for musical reasons, not political reasons. I'm interested in writing about the world, but we came together in the first place for the joy of playing music not the message, that's actually the thing to us. The abstractness of music, not the philosophy. The philosophy, as we've established, is very jumbled-up. We've got songs that completely contradict each other: "I believe in vengeance." "I don't believe in vengeance, I believe in forgiveness." We can go through both views in the same set quite happily.
Allan: The one thing that stood out at the Seattle show is that I don't think I've seen a performer who was more passionately engaged. You had an amazing look in your eyes: of engagement with the language, with the music. How does it feel to you, when you're performing?
Justin: Well, I have good days and bad days. I remember liking that gig. What do I feel? It's strange, I don't know.
Allan: You could be a fanatic preacher.
Justin: Oh, I'm well-aware, I could have turned New Model Army into this fanatical cult, but I don't want to do that. I'm very much lost in the music. My favorite music and my background for music is, more than anything else, northern soul, all the obscure records that came out of Chicago and Detroit, which were largely copies of Motown. I used to go to Wigan Casino in the 1970s. It was a famous club which was the king of the scene in the north of Britain. Uptempo soul/dance music. It's a scene that kind of still exists, and it involved clubs that used to open at midnight. People danced till eight AM. People didn't drink; they took blues and other upper pills. And there was a lot of skill in the dancing. That was the difference between that and raves, which came kinda ten years later.

So that's my first love, American '60s soul music, which is all about rhythm sections. And that's one of the things about New Model Army. People say punk and people say rock and people say folk melodies, but what they miss is that all the albums have this one thing in common, that the bass and drums are really *doing* stuff. That's what I like. We've had three different drummers and three different bass players. They've all been phenomenal. And when I'm onstage, it's a little bit like driving a truck down a hill. All the power is coming from behind me. All I'm doing is steering it. I went to this gig in 1979 by this group called the Ruts—I don't know if you remember them.
Allan: Yep. *Babylon's Burning*...
Justin: ...being their most famous record. And they would have become a huge band, but the singer died of heroin in 1980. But I went to a gig in 1979. There were two hundred people in a little pub in Bradford. I didn't really know what I wanted to do with my life. And in the hour and a half or whatever they played, it was everything wonderful and terrible and scary and musical and exciting about being alive, and I just felt completely exhilarated by the whole thing. I remember walking out of the gig thinking, "*That's* what I want to do. If I could ever, ever make people feel as tense and amazed as I felt tonight, I will die a happy man." And that kind of gig remains my template. Every time I go on stage, I want people to feel how I felt that night. That's pretty much it.
Allan: In terms of intense engagements with experience—I know when you were in Vancouver, you talked about going whale watching—you did your container ship trip across the Atlantic (the inspiration for Justin's solo record, *Navigating by the Stars*), I think you've done some mountain climbing, based on what you said onstage in Seattle...
Justin: I smuggled a truck full of stuff into Pakistan once, back in the late 1970s. It was a long time ago. It was a Pakistani mafiosi that I fell in with. I was basically driving a truck from Bradford to Pakistan with videos and boots and shoes and engine parts in it, in a convoy of other trucks with all-Pakistani drivers, to what they now call the tribal homeland. It's the area of Pakistan that the United States is panicking about. It's the area of Pakistan that's actually Afghanistan. The people there are Pashtuns. They're completely tribal. They've never been controlled by anyone. It was them that I kind of ran with, and there were three or four of them that I got on really well with, but the leader of the group, I fell out badly with, and it turned out later that he was a killer: a business-killer, rather than a religion-killer. So I got out of that.

They're tribal people. As we all were, once. Their loyalty is to their tribe. I think if times get really hard, which they might in the future,



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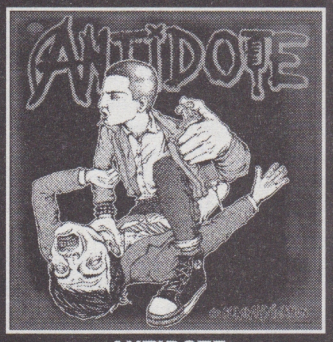
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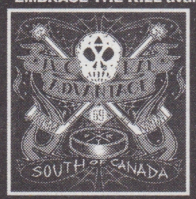
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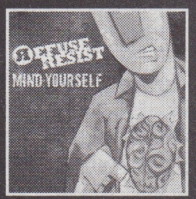
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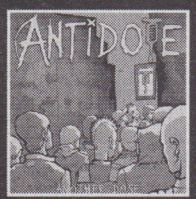
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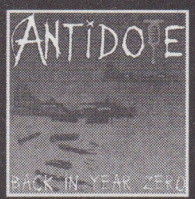
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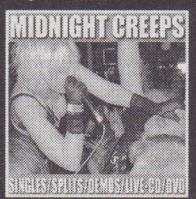
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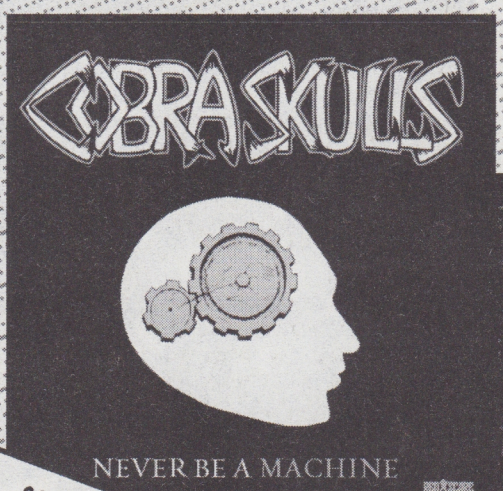
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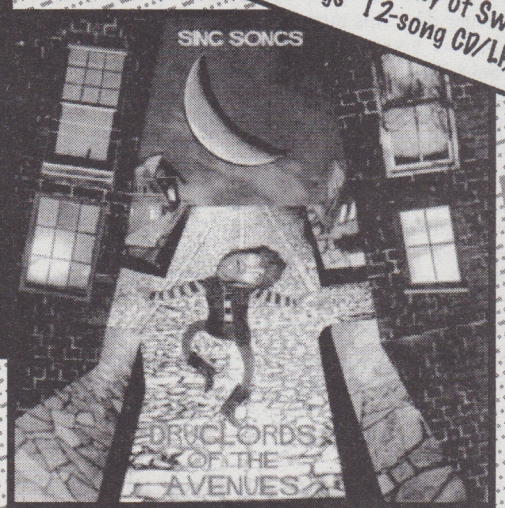
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we'll find that this veneer of liberal civilization—which has its roots, really, in the English revolution, more than anywhere else—is thinner than we think. People for whom life is hard, which is most people in the world, revert to tribal loyalties. Because if life is really hard, who are you going to rely on? Your family are the most reliable people.

Allan: And that comes into your songs, quite often. You've talked about family...

Justin: I'm fascinated by this clash of loyalties, because I come from that liberal individualistic background, where you kind of listen to your conscience and act accordingly. But thirty years ago, when I met Joolz, her parents on both sides were army people, and when I met her, she was married to a Hell's Angel. Her instincts were all kind of gang- or tribe-related. And all through our relationship, we've had that kind of clash, between your first loyalty being tribal, or your first loyalty being self-righteous. That interests me. I don't think either is absolutely right or wrong. I think there *has* to be a sense of loyalty between small groups of people. I don't think either absolute tribalism or absolute individualism is right—they're both right, and they're both wrong. In tribalism at its best, you have a system of support for all people. At its worst, you get petty tribal squabbles and warfare that ends in years of slaughter. And in individualism, you get the sort of freedom that especially North America particularly values, but in the same way, you walk over the people who happen to be sleeping in the street, because it's not your responsibility.

Allan: The cancelled 2007 U.S. tour and the band was banned from playing in the U.S. in 1985-86: did that have anything to do with politics?

Justin: We'll never know. They told us it was on account of a technicality, but we'll never know if that's true or not. We'd be stupid to speculate publicly.

Allan: Joolz—I gather you're somewhat private—but you've been a couple for a long time, right?

Justin: Yeah, kinda.

Allan: The songs that you've written about relationships—things like "Poison Street," or Joolz' song "Love Is," off *Hex*—I've assumed some of them are about your relationship with her.

Justin: Some are, some aren't.

Allan: They seem very, um, tempestuous.

Justin: [laughs]

Allan: Based on songs like those, it seems like it might be a stormy relationship.

Justin: All relationships are stormy! Aren't they? I mean, a little bit. I have to say we're not that stormy these days, but... we have a complicated relationship. The important thing is that we started a conversation about ideas and art and god and beauty and the world and everything in 1979, and we're still involved in the same conversation. This is the secret of a long relationship—you never run out of things to talk about.

Allan: It helps that you're intelligent, creative people, as well.

Justin: It also helps that we don't do the same thing. She does tattoos, artwork, illustration work, and writes novels and poetry, and I write songs. If we were doing the same thing, I think it'd be more difficult, because then we'd be in direct competition.

Allan: You have sometimes done the same thing—the Red Sky Coven albums, you've worked together on.

Justin: Yeah, but she's doing what she does, which is reading her poetry and telling stories, and I'm singing songs. It's not quite competition.

Allan: Do you ever make the decision to pull songs, when you're going to a particular country, because of the history or the political situation in that country?

Justin: Very rarely. A couple of years ago, we played a yearly festival to celebrate the liberation of Holland from the Nazis. We only had a short set and we thought "Here Comes the War" was probably the wrong song for the occasion. So we didn't play it. But generally speaking, we don't do that.

Allan: Let me ask you about the album *High*. I've never seen your lyrics as being very pro-progress…

Justin: Yeah, I come across as a bit of a Luddite. I'm not really, actually—here I am, speeding down the freeway, talking to you on a mobile phone.

Allan: But on this album in particular, in "Rivers," in "Into the Wind," there's almost an awe at human progress. There's a horror, but also an awe. It seems somewhat of a changed perspective.

Justin: Maybe. Yeah, I think people are pretty amazing. Our capabilities are pretty amazing. We're clever monkeys.

Allan: So many of the songs seem to fit thematically—partaking of an attempt to rise above the current situation and look around.

Justin: Almost disengaged. I think *High* is quite interesting in that half the songs are very engaged with the here and now—"All Consuming Fire," or the one about Iraq, "Bloodsports"—although it's written more about Bradford than Iraq. They're very engaged. And then there are songs about disengagement, like "High." That's very me.

Sometimes I live in the timescale of people, and sometimes I live in the timescale of nature, which people are obviously a little splinter of. In which case, all of this is just the blink of an eye. And there's part of me that has the sense that I was born on earth three and a half thousand million years ago or whenever life started—and I will die, and you will die when life on earth finishes, which is a long, long time away. Life on earth will survive human beings very well. Part of me sees things in that kind of timescale.

Allan: Was there a conscious attempt to develop that theme on the album?

Justin: No. As I get older, I'm pulled both ways simultaneously. I think that's a pretty common thing: people who are very politically engaged when they're young, there's a pretty common journey to elsewhere. Most famously, I suppose, Malcolm X: that journey, of someone who starts very materialistic, then finds radical politics, and then eventually finds something much deeper and longer-lasting. And is killed for it! [chuckles]. There's a guy called John Liburne, who is the founder of the Levellers movement in the English Civil War.

Allan: Freeborn John.

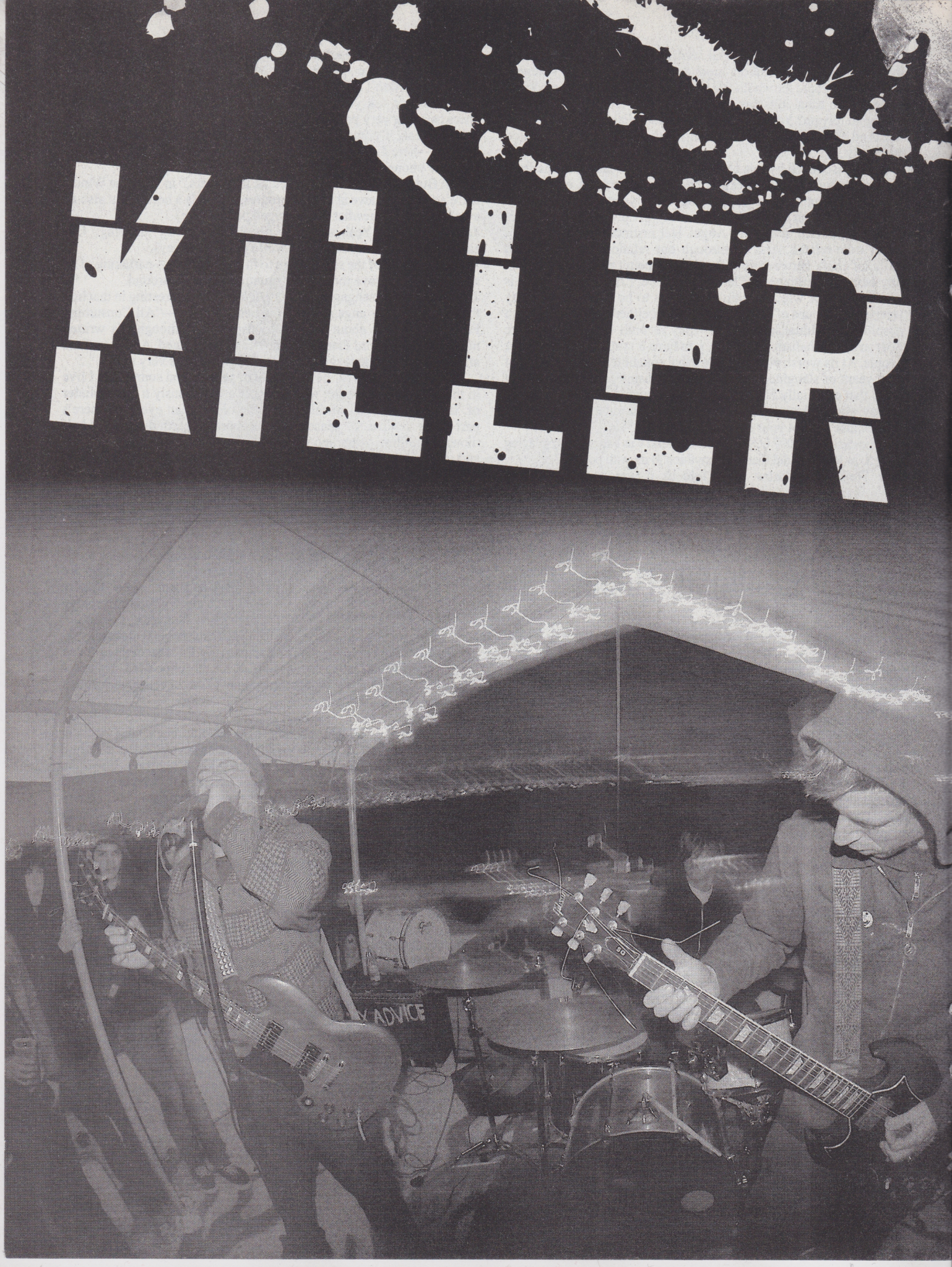
Justin: This is a classic example of a revolutionary who actually ended up as a Quaker, almost renouncing the revolution as a failure and turning to god. It's a pretty common thing, I'm afraid. It's in the nature of getting older, this thing about acceptance, which is a large part of religion. There's that famous prayer: "Please god, help me to change the things I can change, to accept the things I can't change and give me the wisdom to know the difference." As you get older, you realize it's the relations with the people around you and so on that you have any kind of control over—that the wider world, you have no control over.

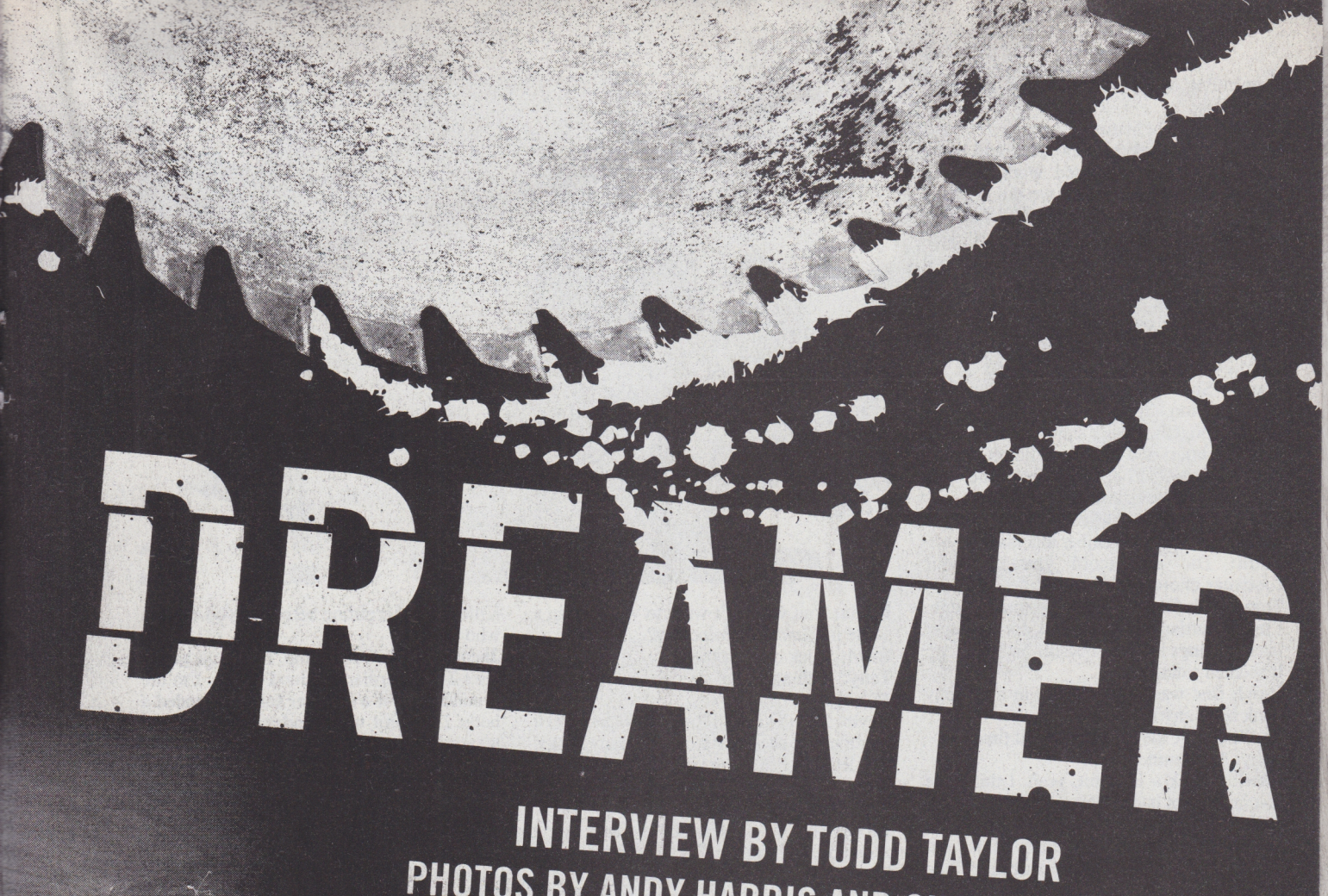
When you're young, you say, "I don't care what anyone thinks about me," but actually you do very much deeply care what people think about you. You want people to think you're clever and sexy and brilliant. It hit me when I was about forty. And this huge weight falls off your back. I remember thinking, "Actually, I don't give a shit what anybody thinks, apart from the people close to me. I don't give a damn."

Allan: Do you think of retiring the band at any point?

Justin: In terms of writing songs and going around the world singing them for people, I can't think of anything I would rather do until I die. It seems to be something that I love, basically. All those musos who complain about hotel rooms and airports and stuff—I don't mind any of it, I like all of it. I like that way of life. It changes if you have children. I don't. Michael, who is my main partner in the band, since Robert left in 1998—since I like working with drummers—has two young children. And to be honest, when we go away on tour for three months, it's not something he likes doing. And I understand that. We'll see.

FAILURE AND TURNING TO GOD. IT'S A PRETTY COMMON THING, I'M AFRAID.


KILLER



KILLER DREAMER

INTERVIEW BY TODD TAYLOR
PHOTOS BY ANDY HARRIS AND CHERYL SHANTY
LAYOUT BY LAUREN MEASURE

Imagine if zombies raided the local Goodwill, scored some choice finds, and then started following the scent of brains. When they capture you, instead of roughly grabbing your head, sticking their fingers in your ear holes for a better grip, intent on eating your noodle, they peel your skin back a little with some blistering punk. They work in some yelps, screams, screeches, and galloping drums. To give you a nice little scare, but not too much. They're actually very friendly, dirty-fingernailed zombies, who are just looking for a good time and will stencil anything that isn't moving.

Killer Dreamer is a punk band from San Pedro, California. They're a band perfectly comfortable creating music that's coming from a slightly different world; a strange world that is right under most people's noses—like the worlds of weeds or insects. It's a world where protector gargoyles fly winged scarabs from the Egyptian to the Mayan pyramids over continents of blood. It's a world where Snake Plissken is President and yuppies are ground up and prepared into award-winning chili. It's a world where Killer Dreamer rules an army of pigeons and questions PETA's tactics with suggested viewings of *Cannibal Holocaust*.

Their music is juicy. A little icky. A little sticky. And a whole lot of action rad.

Rawl Morales: Drums
Jacob Gaxiola: Guitar
Kevin Carle: Guitar
Tony Cook: Bass

Todd: Most of you were in the Jag Offs, correct?
Rawl: Three out of four of us were the Jag Offs. Kevin wasn't, but he always wanted to be a Jag Off.
Kevin: I did.
Todd: One of the distinguishing features of the Jag Offs was Monica. What happened to Monica and how did the transition go from the Jag Offs to Killer Dreamer?
Jacob: She got out of playing guitar and playing music and… we weren't.
Rawl: Kevin moved to Pedro.
Jacob: Moved into the house. Kevin was in the Four Letter Words and we had a split record on Recess with them. We're pretty much the remnants of that split.

Rawl: For awhile, Monica did move to New York.
Todd: Indefinite hiatus?
Rawl: She moved to New York and came back and then we started working on a record. We did the record, we did a tour. I think we got the records during the first tour, in the middle.
Tony: She had also moved to San Francisco for a year. We were still a band, though. We were on hiatus back then. We could have worked things out, but she didn't have as much time anymore. She became involved with… traveling.
Rawl: She was working at Hopeless Records, too. It became harder to get practices together. We'd show up for practice and wait hours and hours and hours. "Fuck, where is she?" Phone call from the East Coast, "Sorry, just flew to New York."
Tony: I love her, but I wasn't wearing the right shoes anymore. I remember that distinctly.
Todd: Did she scold you for your footwear choices?
Tony: Yeah. [laughs] She's a genius, though. I'm not putting her down. But, for whatever reason, things like that became an argument. It seemed ridiculous.
Rawl: She wasn't into being in a scrappy punk band anymore.
Todd: Didn't she serve some jail time?
Tony: No comment.
Rawl: I think a little bit, yeah. I think she just finally got back in November.
Todd: What is the concept of Killer Dreamer? And if I may throw this out: Action Zombie Punk as a possibility. Take it from there.
Rawl: I guess the concept of Action Zombie Punk is all those little kid things that you like: horror movies and skateboarding, being scruffy and scrappy.
Jacob: Being left-handed.
Tony: It was never premeditated, the concept. We've always been just who we are, for whatever reasons. Action Zombie Punk happens to be one of the things that we naturally are.
Todd: I'm not aware of any other band that's claimed it.
Tony: That's a big piece of it.
Todd: What would be another piece of it?
Jacob: What else would four guys do who lived together? [laughter] Okay, what else would four heterosexual male musicians do?
Tony: But I dance like I'm gay. If I wanted to…
Todd: If you could be in any scene of a horror movie and wake up to that tomorrow morning, what would it be?
Jacob: It would be fun to be in the mall in *Dawn of the Dead* and shoot zombies. That'd be fun, right? If zombies came around, I'd feel bad shooting them and stuff. I'd probably feed 'em.
Kevin: And what would you feed 'em? Buddies?
Jacob: Yeah. I'll just teach 'em how to eat chicken.
Rawl: Give them a bass. Feed 'em chicken.



Kevin: You wouldn't want to wake up in a scene in *Cannibal Holocaust*?
Rawl: Stuck on the pole.
Tony: With a pole up my ass.
Jacob: No.
Kevin: I don't know if I want to wake up in a horror movie because it would be pretty freaky. But, let's say I'm going to be somebody who's messing stuff up. It'll probably be Leatherface because he's so creepy.
Jacob: He's sweet and crafty. Does home economics arts and crafts. Skull bowls.
Kevin: All those bone ornaments; they're pretty cool. It doesn't seem like it's his fault he is the way he is. I just got *Texas Chainsaw Massacre II* the other day. That movie is great.
Jacob: It's the '80s. They kill yuppies. They become entrepreneurs. He wins the chili cook-off.
Kevin: He cooks the yuppies into chili. That's the big surprise.
Rawl: They all live at the old amusement park.
Tony: It's not a horror movie, but Snake Plissken from *Escape from New York*. Or Joliet Jake Blues from *The Blues Brothers*. Or Otto. Those three things together are my biggest inspiration musically, artistically, and spiritually. Otto—that's how I discovered about punk, through *Repo Man*.
Rawl: I like Harry Dean Stanton in *Repo Man*.
Todd: The only one I'd add to the list would be Bluto Blutarsky from *Animal House*: a motivated individual who didn't let facts stand in the way of a mission.
Jacob: Let's talk about what movies got us into punk rock. I'll go first. I think it was either *Return of the Living Dead*. They had punks it. And they had an awesome, rockin' soundtrack. Who was on that? TSOL, Roky Erickson, 45 Grave, The Cramps.
Todd: A dead, half dog that comes to life.
Jacob: *Texas Chainsaw Massacre II* had The Cramps in it and that's when I knew… The Cramps are pretty cool.
Todd: There's actually a fifth member of Killer Dreamer sitting here. Can you explain who he is.
Jacob: That is Gorgomoth. He's a gargoyle. He's The Guardian of Good Times. I'm the proud father of a monster son. He needed a body. His spirit was wandering around and he needed a vessel, so he got control of my hands and I put him together, and now he keeps us safe from bad energy. Just like a gargoyle would. Look at his face. Look at him. He's happy.
Kevin: He's sweet.
Jacob: He's our, I guess, our mascot.
Kevin: He's our manager.
Todd: He graced both of your LP covers.
Jacob: I guess he'd be like our Eddie (Iron Maiden's mascot).
Tony: He's photogenic as hell.
Jacob: He really is alive.
Todd: Where did you get the name Gorgomoth?
Jacob: He told me. I saw his face. And I said, "What's your name?" And he whispered—because he was behind my back the whole time, before he had his body together. He said, "Gorgomoth." It sounds similar to Gorgoroth, which is in *The Lord of the Rings*, Mordor and all that stuff, but that had nothing to do with it. Those are just those ancient names of things that they whisper in your ears, to people who are artists and stuff. How did Tolkien come up with Gorgoroth? Probably told him. That's how it works.
Todd: How has Gorgomoth protected you? Give me one instance where he prevented a bad time from happening.
Jacob: I don't know. It never happened.
Todd: Was there a bad time coming your way that you could see?
Kevin: He protected us in the snow when we crashed. He glided us across the snow.
Jacob: Okay, you want to hear the truth?
Todd: No. Just fuckin' lie to me.
Jacob: When we were in the Jag Offs, when we'd go on tour, it'd always happen when we were staying in hotel rooms. For some reason. This happened to me. I'm sure it

happened to the other guys. Wake up in the night. Can't breathe. Something pushing you down. Some kind of dark, bad thing. Right? Remember that Tony?

Tony: Yes. Sleeping next to graveyards.

Jacob: That's a horrible feeling.

Rawl: I always equated it to a lack of sleep.

Jacob: I think it had something to do with the air conditioning or something. That kind of freaked me out, so I needed my own personal gargoyle to keep that stuff away.

Tony: I think most importantly, Gorgomoth is our friend. We were on tour and we were playing a house party in Wisconsin or some cheese-eating place like that—no offense. Gorgomoth was taking care of the merch and we're all just partying, hanging out with the locals. Word got around really quick that someone had punched Gorgomoth.

Kevin: It was Brooklyn, Halloween night.

Tony: All I knew is that our friend just got punched. "Where is he?" "Who did it?" "What did he look like?"

Rawl: So we have his back.

Tony: He's got our back.

Jacob: And that guy got run over by a car the next day.

Tony: But we had nothing to do with that.

Kevin: It was Tate, wasn't it?

Kevin: It wasn't a Ford Econoline.

Rawl: We didn't run him over.

Todd: What are your guys' day jobs?

Rawl: Kevin's just got a gig substitute teaching. The rest of us work at a ferry express going to Catalina Island.

Todd: How many people in the San Pedro scrappy punk scene work there?

Rawl: Just Killer Dreamer and some of the kids from this band DLA. We sort of took it over.

Kevin: It's nice when we all get to hang out on the dock together, waiting for a boat to come in.

Tony: For sure, though, our entire household works there. Almost everybody who lives in the house.

Todd: How do you guys even out, on one hand, being part of the Slack Mafia, and on the other hand, being really, really productive? You have Cali Mucho screen printing going, you guys set up an all-analog recording studio in the house, and you're an active band. How do you balance those two things out?

Kevin: That's what we're trying to figure out: instead of dicking people over, trying to figure out how to make the time work.

Rawl: There's not too much slack anymore.

Jacob: Let's go back. The Slack Mafia was an Orange County, Four Letter Words thing. They had the Bob (Dobbs, Church of the Subgenius) thing. We were from Pedro and had the Porch Core thing. Hanging out on porches. But now, we live in a mansion and don't really have a porch.

Todd: But you still have a lot of "core" though.

Jacob: I never claimed Slack Mafia. That wasn't my scene.

Tony: I'm sorry. I just got to say this. Toys That Kill was interviewed by you…

Todd: I remember. Issue number seven. Todd Congelliere said, "Porch Core is just the figment of you lame cunts' imaginations. It was written on a bathroom wall."

Tony: Yeah. Let me say, first of all—I love Todd; I really love him, he's awesome—Porch Core was around before him and it's not around anymore because we really don't have porches. He was definitely part of it, but I just want to say that they don't have the authority to say it was a stupid joke. It was a stupid joke. It was.

Rawl: But it was our stupid joke.

Tony: Together, our stupid joke.

Kevin: The whole thing with slack, though, is just going against normalcy, I guess. Seeing how much stuff you can get away with under the radar. Making it happen.

Rawl: Not about sitting on your ass, watching TV.

Kevin: One day I taught, got home, printed shirts for three hours, then recorded a band 'til midnight, woke up, and went to work the next morning. Somebody who may not be a slacker, but I'm doing things so I don't have to live in normalcy. I could just sit in my house and create these things with my friends.

Todd: To people who aren't into the things that we're into, usually, their first question is, "So, are you going to make some money off of that?"

Rawl: That's always the first question.

Todd: Or, especially with you, Rawl, "Oh, you play with Mike Watt. He's a famous dude. So you're living off the music, right?"

Rawl: "Where's your limo?"

Todd: Exactly.

Rawl: "Where's the roadies?" "I am the roadie."

Todd: We all live in a community. Your community is based, geographically in San Pedro and your house.

Rawl: Very in the house.

Todd: How many people live in that house?

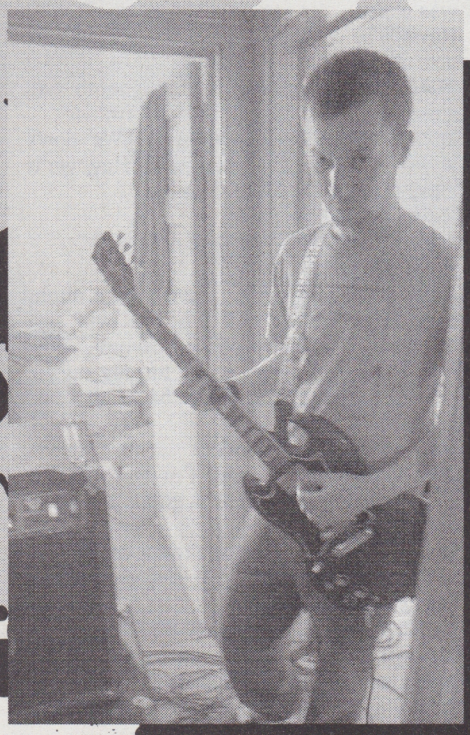
Rawl: Nine, I believe.

Todd: And you took over the entire house.

Rawl: Yeah. We have two floors of a three-story house.

Todd: And in the bottom, in the garage, is where the screen-printing happens. So why is it important that you can control your own modes of operation, that you produce your own things?

Tony: It wouldn't get done otherwise, basically, because no one's going out of their way to give us anything or do anything for us, besides what we put into it. And we're willing to help other people and visa versa. Every step that is taken, we take it. Some more than others, depending on what it is.



"IF ZOMBIES CAME AROUND, I'D FEEL BAD SHOOTING THEM AND STUFF. I'D PROBABLY FEED 'EM."

"GIVE THEM A BASS. FEED 'EM CHICKEN."

IF YOU HAVE THE FAITH IN YOURSELF, YOU DO WHAT YOU WANT TO DO AND INVEST IN IT.

Jacob: We just recorded our new album at our house.

Kevin: I believe we benefit more if we control what we're doing because it's exactly what we want it to be and then we don't have somebody telling us, "You know, I don't know about this." It's our sweat and blood, for sure.

Todd: In the best sense, there's more ownership. "I made that."

Rawl: It's complete ownership.

Todd: And not, "I'm keeping it away from other people." It's "I take full responsibility for it."

Rawl: Guaranteed.

Tony: We're all adults at this point and we aren't about to have other people make decisions for us, unless it's friends where we're working together.

Rawl: Plus, it's kind of tough to deal with people. To get funds together. Or have people have faith in you to do things. If you have the faith in yourself, you do what you want to do and invest in it.

Todd: On that tip, how did Kyle Kapow produce your first self-titled LP?

Rawl: He was just helping with the sounds and stuff like that. He wanted the credits. It was an issue. What does a producer do? They pay for stuff, right?

Tony: Moral support. Hanging out.

Kevin: Now he wants to produce it into garbage.

Todd: What's surprising with that record—I listened to it again last night—is that it's already five years old.

Rawl: It's a trip, huh? Time flies.

Tony: We're still little kids, which goes against what I just said.

Todd: There's a difference between being childish and being a little kid at heart—no matter how old you get—and approaching things with a naïve innocence, but understand by operating this way, you're going to get hit in the nuts every day. You just wake up knowing that.

Tony: That's the Killer part of the Dreamer. "I dream of not getting kicked in the nuts everyday, one day."

Todd: So where did the name come from? I have a theory.

Rawl: You go first.

Todd: *Kill the Dreamer's Dream*, the Fleshies record, and someone was very stoned.

Rawl: That's how it came about. It was Laila sitting in Tony's room.

Kevin: I think she was just lovin' on the record.

Rawl: We had a show booked. I was staying in Oakland for a little bit and was kind of bummed out we didn't have the Jag Offs anymore. People wanted us to come and play gigs. I was like, "We have a new band. We just started practicing." Total bullshit. "Okay, you guys come up and play next month." When I was living there, there were flyers. "The San Pedro scumbags." I brought one home. "We need a name so bad." So Laila came up with the name, but I know we were listening to that record.

Jacob: Now that I remember, I think it started on a dare from Chris Kohler (ex-Sexy, Deadly Weapons).

Rawl: Then we were on a flyer, so we went and did the two songs we knew and a Flipper cover.

Tony: Laila made a stencil, and before it was a band—at the same time, we were trying to think of a band name—we were also stenciling a lot of stuff together, the whole house. We made a Killer Dreamer stencil just because it was ridiculous-sounding and kind of mysterious and whatnot.

Jacob: Our first couple tours, every different town we'd go to, we'd look at the flyer and it'd say, "Kill The Dreamer" or "Dreamer Killer."

Tony: "Dream Killer."

Jacob: Even in that Gilman St. book (*924 Gilman*), they got our name wrong at the end, where they list all the bands.

Tony: Even at the skatepark show, we were listed as "Killer Dreams."

Todd: Speaking of Gilman…

Jacob: We never got kicked out of there or got caught drinking there. We weren't even in the town.

Rawl: But we, somehow, destroyed the scene.

Todd: You and Sparks malt beverage.

Tony: It was printed in two issues of *AMP*. Jesse Luscious, our old friend.

Todd: Is he joking with you?

Tony: No. We've known him forever, from Todd and Recess.

Rawl: The Criminals.

Tony: And he worked security. Admittedly, a stressful job, having the club not shut down by people drinking, and we had been up there before where we were drinking beers, and he had asked us not to. Us, and everyone else, at least three times. A few months later, in this magazine, which he writes a column for, he named us as one of the reasons why Gilman will be destroyed. And he had this fictitious story about how we were drinking whiskey at the Gilman St. club. I don't even drink whiskey.

Jacob: Busted by undercover vice cops.

Kevin: That was the Abi Yoyos.

Rawl: That's how we became friends with them.

Tony: That was lame. He made it up and he printed it twice.

Todd: Have you talked to him about it?

Tony: I haven't seen him.

Rawl: As they say, there's no such thing as bad press.

Kevin: He wrote me and said, "Just a warning. New *AMP*'s coming out in a couple days. I wrote a column about you and you guys are in it and it's not good."

Tony: On the date he says, the show, we weren't in the Bay Area.

Jacob: I was in San Pedro, eating carne asada… and I would like to start some false accusations myself.

Kevin: Was there a retraction? I don't recall.

Todd: You guys have been around for a long time and why attack a group that's doing something positive?

Tony: Maybe he knows what nice people we really are and he doesn't have to worry about us physically attacking him. So he picked the nicest band he could think of to attack. More like Jesse Vicious. [laughter] He was having a hard time, personal issues.

Todd: Then he should hash it out with that person. Let's go back to the van accident where Gogomoth saved you.

Rawl: Going to Minneapolis on Kevin's birthday after leaving Missoula. Icy roads. We slid off the highway en route to Minneapolis. I just remember everything just slowing down. Almost just stop. All sound, gone. Everything.

Kevin: Even the Ramones turned off. It was weird.

Rawl: The cassette stopped. Everything just gets quiet.

Todd: It's Gorgomoth telling you to pay attention.

Jacob: We're from California. We don't know how it works. We figure, "Hey, we'll leave really early in the morning."

Rawl: We left too early.

Jacob: "And we'll get there in time."

Rawl: Black ice.

Jacob: Snows falling. There was a slight curve on the road and I hear Kevin say, "We're not going to make this turn." The next thing you know, we're turning on the side of the road. I'm in the back, all I see is snow.

Rawl: Snow to the window.

Jacob: The whole time, I'm worried that some other car behind us is going to swerve off into us.

Rawl: We're going to have to eat each other.

Jacob: But there's no other cars on the road because we're idiots.

Rawl: Who would you have ate first?

Kevin: It was crazy. I said, "We're not going to make this." Then Rawl goes, "Are we going to flip? Are we going to flip?" And

then all "Ooooooooooooo," just gliding through snow in perfect harmony.
Tony: It was terrifying.
Kevin: We started cracking up so hard.
Tony: It was like crashing into a void.
Kevin: Then it was scary as shit for the next three days.
Jacob: A soft blanket of snow. I'm convinced if Gorgomoth wasn't there…
Rawl: Ball of flame.
Tony: It was a serious moment. It could have gone either way. It was right after the Exploding Hearts had their unfortunate accident. It was on everyone's mind. Vans were going down.
Kevin: That was scary. We took a picture of when we got back on the road, just to show how crazy it was outside and it looks like you're on some gas planet. It's nuts.
Tony: After that, Kevin had to drive nine more hours in the same conditions.
Kevin: Happy birthday.
Rawl: But then we went and played two kick-ass shows.
Jacob: If you're in a band, traveling, you should go tour in the snow. The winter time. Fuck a summer tour. Just once. It's bonding. "If I die today, I'll be happy if I die next to you, brother."
Tony: It's real shit. Test your mettle.
Todd: It's not calculated, but the reason that Killer Dreamer can tour across America is that you do the same for bands that come through San Pedro.
Rawl: That's how it all started for us. You could call it the old days or whatever, the bands networking with other bands and traveling around, we meet people. It kind of was the opposite for us. We were doing shows before we went on our first tour.
Tony: Shows came up after the FYP connection. Todd Congelliere had already tapped into the network for many years. We became friends with FYP and ended up going on tour with them—not as a band. Rawl played drums.
Rawl: I drummed for them for a few years.
Tony: I roadied for a few.
Rawl: I started out as doing merch and doing the roadie stuff. Then I guess I sucked at that, so I played drums.
Jacob: I did the zombie makeup on the cover of *My Man Grumpy*.
Tony: It just snowballs.
Jacob: You know, you go somewhere, you meet somebody, you play a rad show with a rad band you never heard of, you stay at their house and they feed you. Then, hey, who knows, in a year or two, they're at your house. And what do you do? Say, "No, you can't stay here. I don't have a show for you"? No. Hammy's band came down here the other day. We let them play in the basement. We had a bar-b-que.
Todd: Was that Pigs?
Tony: They're awesome. Very metal. Thrash.
Kevin: Like housing soldiers. You house bands and they do it back.
Jacob: It's like the underground railroad.
Tony: …to candyland.
Rawl: It is kind of like a secret society. It sounds so cliché, but it's the underground network.
Tony: In the best way. I don't think normal people can understand it.
Rawl: It's the small things. People. Your fellow citizen.
Jacob: People should go other places and meet other people. [laughter]
Tony: The only reason that Pedro is even tolerable as a hometown is because we have seen and traveled other places, but if all we knew is our hometown, we wouldn't be motivated to do anything.
Kevin: We're under the radar in our own town.
Rawl: The whole reason it became tolerable for us was because we decided, "Fuck moving to Seattle. Fuck moving to Berkeley." We can visit there and bring the bands here and try to get things that we like about other places here, as well, too.
Tony: It's kind of a cop out; you move somewhere easy. It's like, "I'm going to go to Disneyland every day. I'm going to move up to where they have a rad punk scene and just fit in and go to punk shows."
Kevin: That's what happened to me. [laughter]
Rawl: But you helped it a lot.
Todd: You know this. San Pedro's a perfect example. In any DIY scene, it's usually a group of people and it grows much bigger than those people, but when those people stop doing those things, it's surprising how quickly it dries up. Pedro's going into its third generation now.
Rawl: I wish a lot of those kids start carrying their own weight. That's all I'm saying.
Kevin: We're still the ones putting on the shows.
Rawl: I like being in the band and putting on the shows, making the flyers, but a little help would be nice.
Tony: It's stronger now, though, than it has been in the past.
Jacob: There's actually bands, little guys, DLA. They've got a 7" out. They play really fast punk. It's cool.
Kevin: They rule.
Jacob: They've got a little moshing crew that shows up.
Tony: For the record, fuck the mosh. Get over it. Learn something better.
Rawl: How come the pit never goes counterclockwise?
Tony: Because we're north of the equator.
Jacob: That one big guy is in prison now.
Todd: So how's Simon the cat doing?
Rawl: Simon's our house cat. We got him when we lived at Fourth St. He was actually helping do the doors and stuff. He's been there since he was a little kitty. We brought him to the new house. We came home one night after a gig and he was really hurt. You could tell something was very wrong with him. Kinda fetal. We took him to the doctor. His insides were twisted up. His back leg was all messed up.
Tony: His abdomen muscles were detached from his skeleton. Pretty much the entire lower midsection was not connected with anything. He either fell off the balcony on the third story or fell onto the second story balcony on his way down, or he got hit by a car. But a car seems like it would smash him. It may have been some lame-ass gangster kid with boots on.
Rawl: He's good. His hair is growing back. He limps in the morning when it's cold.
Todd: You guys threw a benefit for him. Simon Lives.
Rawl: Three. One in Pedro. The Minneapolis punk rockers helped us. Japanther from Brooklyn helped us. We made a bunch of T-shirts. So, he lives, thanks to those people.
Todd: As a band, how do you guys think you're developing? And I'm not all, "You got a killer lick right there!"
Rawl: With the recording, it's trippy, because we did this one all ourselves. First, with the Jag Offs, we did it with a guy, Rusty. It was all in the computer in his back house. It was

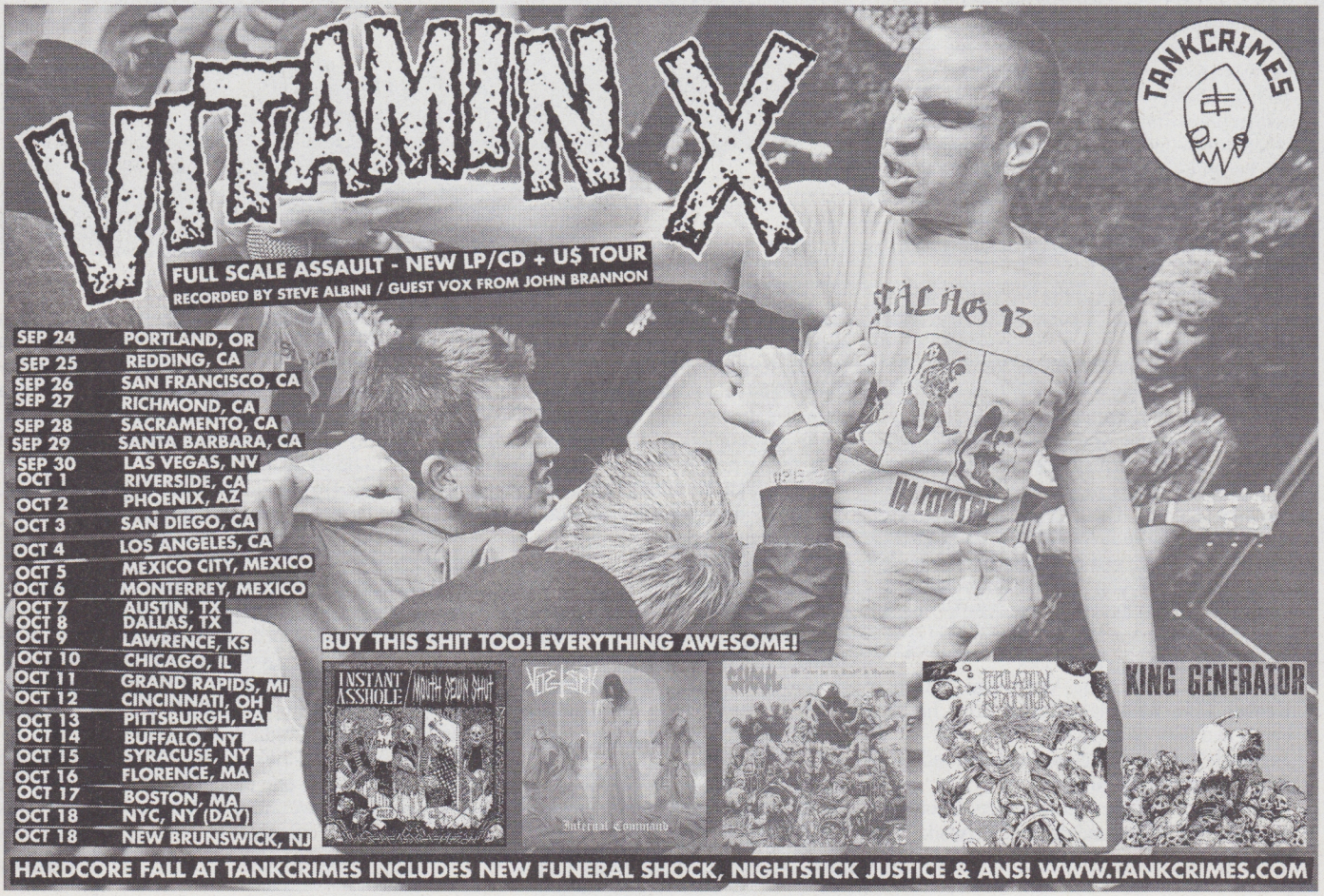




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all ProTools shit, or whatever you call it. We did that. I remember mixing it, and we're all, "You can hear guitar. Fine." The second record for us was with Killer Dreamer, and that was Mike from the Distillery. He was a lot of help, but he did a lot of the mixing and stuff like that.

Kevin: He was running the show.

Jacob: We did have that long-lost Jag Offs record that we never finished from Sonic Iguana. That was on the computer, too. I like analog. You can touch it. I can taste it.

Todd: What about the concept of the band?

Jacob: It's just our personalities coming out. I think we give each other room. "Okay, I'm learning your song. I'm going to learn it. If I can add something to it that you like, that's great." I like bands where everyone contributes. You get three or four different bands in each song. Like Queen. Descendents or All, they had songs by guys that weren't even in the band anymore.

Todd: Do you feel that you're more cohesive as a band? That you're developing your own sound?

Rawl: It is getting there. It's getting better for us.

Tony: It's a whole subconscious thing.

Todd: What were you working against, if it's a subconscious thing?

Tony: Me, personally, I was just working against being lazy.

Jacob: I think we all back each other up. If we're not too sure, "No just do it. It sounds rad. Don't be afraid."

Rawl: The fear factor.

Jacob: These are my best friends. I'd hang out with them anyway if I wasn't in a band with them and they didn't live downstairs. I've known Rawl since third fuckin' grade. We're all long-lost soul brothers. That's what it's all about.

Tony: There're no rules as to what you're supposed to sound like. Anyone's allowed to bring any song; it doesn't have to fit into a mold.

Rawl: This record (*1,000 Years of Servitude*) definitely has a sound to it. I think because we've already done two other records and we kind of know what things will sound like, how it may come out.

Tony: Being in a band is definitely self-discovery. You're finding out who you are as you're doing it. Only after looking back can you maybe see where you were and you could understand more where you're going by where you were.

Todd: Are there any lyrics you wished you'd phrased another way?

Tony: We're not ashamed of anything we write.... and fuck George Bush.

Jacob: There's a new song called "Cannibal Holocaust Denier" and I'm making fun of PETA. You gotta make fun of the people who take themselves the most serious. That song is about me thinking that those people secretly enjoy watching videos of animal torture. I understand shock value. You know, in your face. I was at a party and they had their whole booth set up. What the hell, I don't want to see that. I told them, "You guys should watch *Cannibal Holocaust*. You'll really fuckin' dig that movie." And they're like, "Oh, I've never seen that. Okay."

Tony: Jacob's got another song about being at the head of an army of pigeons, so, obviously, a sense of humor.

Rawl: Of all the songs that could bite us in the ass are the ones about work or the neighbors—who don't even listen to the records—so I think we're safe.

Todd: People may or may not realize that Pedro can be a pretty rough town.

Tony: The roughest.

Todd: It's like Highland Park. It's a random town. Ninety-nine times, you go to the store, no problem. But one day, you have some guy that's freaking out brandishing a weapon... I love where I live.

Tony: I hear gun shots at least once a week. Automatic rifle fire. There are kids getting snipered in the middle of the afternoon on busy streets.

Kevin: Yeah. Kids that I'm fuckin' teaching.

Tony: It's sad. My theory is that there's a whole generation of kids who have just become old enough to become gang bangers. So there's a whole new crop. Things are flaring up. And in Pedro, they always do. They go through cycles of high gang violence.

Rawl: It's always the summer.

Todd: And when the economy takes a shit. The last time I was at your house, there were two guys in your parking lot. The guy with L.A., full back tattoo.

Tony: Those guys were real fuckin' monsters.

Todd: Murderers in training.

Tony: And they have a whole lot of people behind them that you don't even see.

Kevin: They looked like they were in their thirties.

Tony: Old enough to know better.

Todd: Can you remember when you were first getting into playing music?

Tony: I got into playing a bass just from watching Rawl have so much fun. I'd walk to his house every night. Basically, we'd just hang out and watch... I don't know... I don't want to talk about... acid or anything.

Rawl: We'd take a lot of LSD and listen to The Allman Brothers and Pink Floyd.

Jacob: Watch that *Live at Pompeii* movie.

Tony: Rawl bought a Pink Floyd or Black Sabbath record, used. We found a joint in it that was like twenty years old and we were out of weed. We were so stoked. We smoked the hell out of that joint.

Rawl: That was from Peanut Records. I bought Pink Floyd, a double LP, *Ummagumma*.

Tony: Basically, I wanted to be involved. I loved punk. I was really into it. I knew that punk was about being part of it and not just a passive observer.

Todd: What's the best advice that someone's given you, concerning Killer Dreamer?

Rawl: "Please stop playing."

Jacob: "More vocals."

Kevin: Jacob's always giving me good advice. Just to let go and play the guitar and not be scared about what's going to happen.

Todd: What are you scared about?

Kevin: Sounding like shit. You don't want to be playing music and have it be crappy, right? That worries me sometimes.

Rawl: Sometimes it's going to sound a lot more stale if you're just standing up there, doing nothing, all stiff, worried

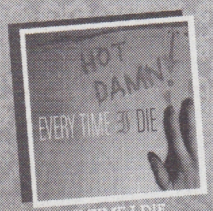
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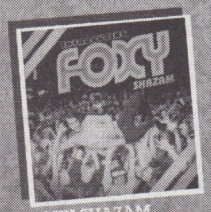
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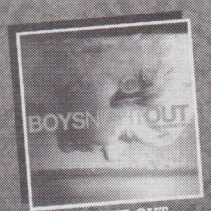
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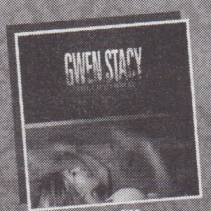
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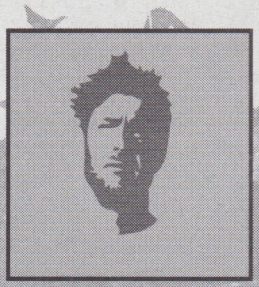
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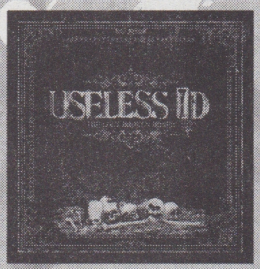
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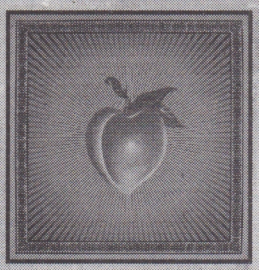


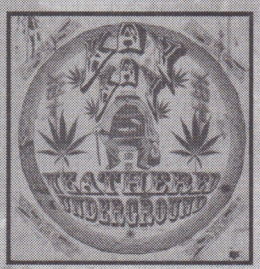
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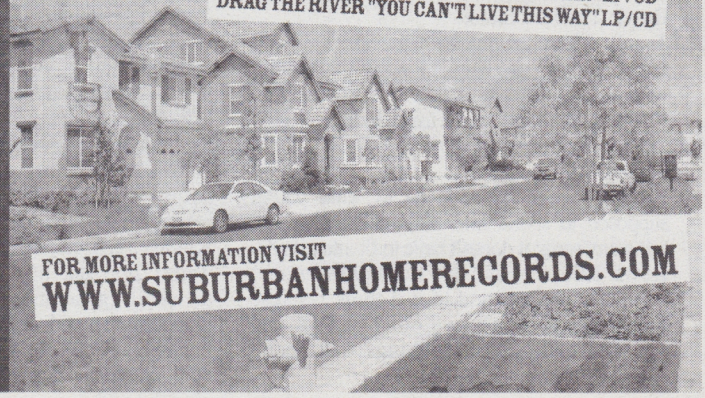


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about what you're going to do. If you let it fly…

Jacob: We have two guitars. I'll back you up. Go off.

Rawl: I guess we give each other our own best advice.

Todd: From a song lyric: how is "the end is the beginning"?

Tony: It's just about to end because everything is sped up faster than it's ever been. Right now, we're at the cusp of a big change. Every generation always thinks that they're the one at the cusp of the big change. And they are because here we are. And it's different than back then. But, right now, things are reaching a point where they're not going to be able to go on much longer. Whereas before, everything was changing gradually, but there're still resources to be had, food to eat, space to stand in, and air to breathe. Also, there's never been such the level of control. There're governments, but now there are few protections for people. Everything is just a product now.

Todd: The merging of corporations and governments scares the shit out of me. When I drop off my mail, I don't want to look at a fuckin' Shrek cutout. If I have to look at him, at least make my shit cheaper, not more expensive. I want an eagle to deliver my mail, not a Disney character.

Tony: Now you've just got to accept that. You've got to choke down that product.

Todd: Especially kids now. I have two nephews. The amount of input into their brains is the most it's ever been. DVDs.

Rawl: In the car, in airplane seats. Everyone has ear buds. Bluetooth.

Todd: Cyborg.

Tony: Me and Jacob are starting a new movement where if you see someone wearing a Bluetooth and talking, you just smack it out of their ear… for them. For their own good.

Jacob: You look like a crazy homeless person, talking to yourself. Is schizophrenia fifty years ahead of technology? I'm going to write a book about that. First time I saw that, I was at an In-N-Out. I got something and I noticed a guy behind me. He looked like he was talking to himself. "Hey, what can I get you? Would you like cheese with that?" "What? This guy's lost his mind." Then he turns his head and he has one of those headphone things. "You look like a fuckin' Borg from Star Trek." Ipods? You're going to get robbed. You're going to get run over. Technology's all about cutting people off from each other.

Tony: Every moment that a person lives is one that is bought by somebody.

Rawl: That's kind of why tour is cool.

Jacob: That's why analog, baby.

Todd: It also slices time up smaller and smaller and smaller. And what happens with that? You're living your life like Metallica's last record. Down to the nanosecond.

Rawl: I think we should bring back the sun dial.

Jacob: That's what the end of the beginning is—when we run out of gas or if it's twenty dollars a gallon. We're going to get horses back. Poop everywhere.

Todd: Aristocrats everywhere.

Jacob: Everything in cycles.

Kevin: I don't know where all the nuclear bombs are going to go.

Tony: Here's the scary part. We think it's crazy now, but it's not just going to go peacefully into the night. It's never going to be the same. This is the new way and it's not going to go back.

Rawl: If you think, though, it's always been the new way. So it's just suckin' and suckin' and suckin', more and more.

Tony: That's my point. There's never been a point on this planet, ever, where it's been depleted. It's a brand new end. The biggest end ever.

Todd: Every major shift in world history has had a time of erosion or creation, but precipitated by cataclysm. If you end your available resources, something very striking has to happen.

Jacob: That's the fun part. That's when you know we're worth a damn.

Rawl: When we're going state to state in wagons.

Jacob: I can't wait to go on tour in the future. Bands will have twenty acoustic guitars and bongos and they're going to trying to recreate the sound of an electric band with amps.

Tony: You know those cars that they put on railroad tracks? I want to get a steam-powered van and we can ride the rails. They have actual adapters for trucks. I want to tour like that. We'll talk about it later.

Rawl: I want to tour by wind.

Jacob: Fart.

Todd: What do you want people to get out of Killer Dreamer?

Jacob: Rock out. Enjoy.

Rawl: Basically, if a few guys like us can do it, anyone can do it. We're not doing too much.

Todd: Do you think you guys set yourself up so you're not traditionally successful? Hypothetically, what would happen if a lot of attention came your way?

Jacob: I would laugh.

Rawl: I don't think the music culture is geared toward that type of music, though.

Todd: Is it intentional that you're never going to be in that situation?

Tony: Not on purpose. Not consciously.

Jacob: Maybe in a hundred years, someone will say, "That's fuckin' rad."

Tony: We're not using your project to springboard into the big game.

Todd: I hate resumé punks. Punks here to get some feathers in their hats for a better job down the line.

Tony: I call them punkees.

Rawl: What about poser? We should just bring that one back.

Kevin: We're into the process of doing things. We're not really concerned with what the end results are. We're like this weird little family now.

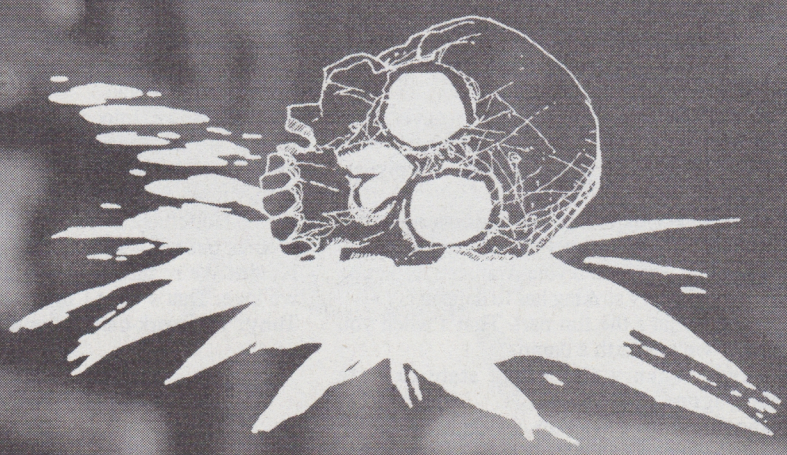
Rawl: Hopefully, there really is no end result. It ends, but we'll start again.

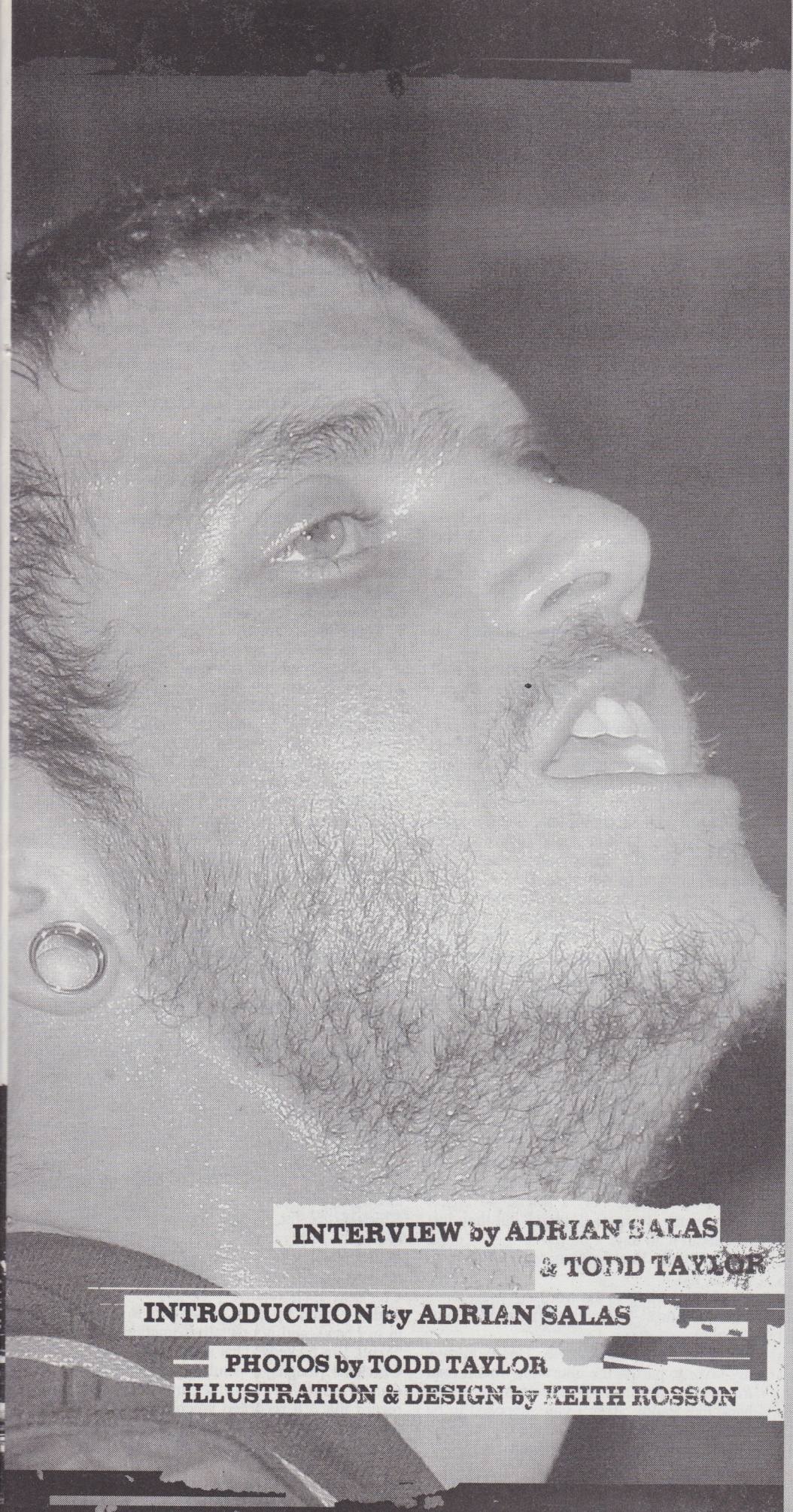
Kevin: We're filling up our time with things we love. That's what I'm working for.

Tony: You work hard for yourself.

IN ANY DIY SCENE, IT'S USUALLY A GROUP OF PEOPLE AND IT GROWS MUCH BIGGER THAN THOSE PEOPLE, BUT WHEN THOSE PEOPLE STOP DOING THOSE THINGS, IT'S SURPRISING HOW QUICKLY IT DRIES UP.

DEAD TO ME





INTERVIEW by ADRIAN SALAS & TODD TAYLOR

INTRODUCTION by ADRIAN SALAS

PHOTOS by TODD TAYLOR

ILLUSTRATION & DESIGN by KEITH ROSSON

I distinctly remember the first time I saw Dead To Me.

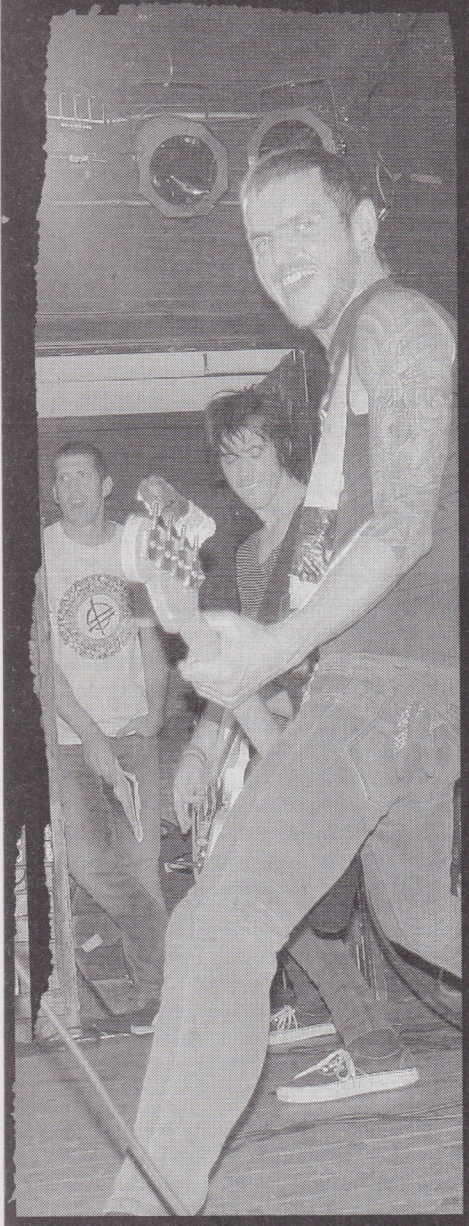
It was a secret NOFX show at the Whisky in Hollywood, and I arrived just in time to see Dead To Me leave the stage. I had never heard of them before, and between the band's name and their ominous hoodies, I assumed they were probably a crust band on a totally mismatched show.

I went to see them play with the Riverboat Gamblers a few months later. This time I knew that the band had Jack Dalrymple of the defunct but great One Man Army in it, so I wasn't expecting blast beats this time. I got to see Dead To Me play this time. I hadn't been that impressed with seeing a live band since stumbling upon The Briefs several years earlier. Watching a band perform without knowing the songs beforehand tends to make the experience fall flat, for me. Instead, I was surprised to find myself feeling the energy radiate from the stage. Quite a bit caught my attention: Chicken's ability to play the bass in the most wide-legged, nearly-the-splits-but-not-quite stance possible; Jack's "honey pipes" voice; and the surprising presence of more than one cute girl in the audience. And Chicken talked onstage... a lot.

I picked up a copy a of the band's debut, *Cuban Ballerina*, a little bit later. A few months later I was playing the album straight through pretty regularly (like three or four times a week). The album is in my top three of the last couple years, and it totally just snuck its way onto that spot. Dead To Me doesn't lack one bit in punk aggression, yet they're extremely tuneful. They're in the vein of bands like the Swingin' Utters, Naked Raygun, and Youth Brigade.

I see Dead To Me every time I can when they roll through, and they get better every time. With a new album, *African Elephant*, on the way, I'm excited to see where they go next. Hell, even if the band completely sucked, they would still be worth seeing just because of Chicken, who has to be the most entertaining punk rock motor-mouth since Fat Mike or Paddy from Dillinger Four.

We got to meet up with Dead To Me in a parking lot during their recent shows with Leatherface and Paint It Black. Talking to the band before and after their set we discussed many things ranging from punk rock sobriety and old school skating, to alternate uses of the phrase "Eiffel Tower."



"These guys don't care about mother nature. RUN DMC doesn't care about the environment."

Adrian: Do you think you lost credibility by not releasing a bunch of multi-colored 7" records and cassette only demos before your full length?

Chicken: It's funny that you say that because before we even knew we were gonna be touring and putting out CDs and all that stuff, when me and Jack were just playing, we put up some demos online to make a MySpace. Then the record ended up coming out, and all these kids were like, "Dude, the demos way better." It was, like, clearly not better; it was not even a matter of opinion. It was a factual thing that the demo was not better. It was recorded, literally, in our friends' kitchen, and it was just for us to have, to kinda laugh about, and just get started. Kids, of course, they find it on the internet and no one's heard it, and they're like, "Dude, this is the best ever, you know?" And then you put out a record that sounds good, you're in tune, all that stuff, and they're like, "Oh my god, dude, that record's so major label, dude." You're like, what? What are you talking about? It's like, no. Kids do that to us all the time, but I wish we did have a bunch of 7" releases with multi-colored vinyl and …

Jack: And tapes and shit.

Chicken: Yeah, we're all record nerds too.

Jack: And really, tapes would be awesome.

Todd: I feel betrayed by tapes.

Chicken: You do? They're actually really like environmentally irresponsible. I remember getting a really long lecture from Todd Propagandhi about the evils of cassette tapes, so now every time I like go grab my Run DMC tape at home, I'm always like, "These guys don't care about mother nature. Run DMC doesn't care about the environment. This sucks, I can't listen to this anymore."

Adrian: Aren't vinyls just big globs of oil, though?

Chicken: Yeah! Yeah, what's up now Todd Propagandhi? [laughs] There could be this vegetable oil vinyl, so like Propagandhi's like…

Todd: Soy [laughs]. It's all soy based.

Chicken: [laughs] Yeah, soy vinyl dude. It's soynyl. That soynyl's so good.

Todd: You gotta watch out that your cat doesn't eat it.

Chicken: Yeah, dude you can't leave that stuff in the sun—or it melts and turns into that weird margarine stuff, you know? It's good times.

Adrian: What does the title *Cuban Ballerina* mean? Why did you pick that to name the record?

Chicken: I saw this documentary on the Independent Film Channel once and this lady was speaking about how she sat next to an old Cuban man on an airplane ride once and started talking to him about love that you have that doesn't always really work out, but you hold on to it forever. He was saying that he grew up in Cuba, was poor, and he fell in love with this ballerina. She was in the Cuban National Ballerina Academy or whatever, and he thought she was too good for him. But he was in love with her, and he said he would always love her for the rest of his life, even though he had a wife and kid of his own. He felt like he would always hold on to that Cuban ballerina. I took it to mean that everybody's got a Cuban ballerina. For me, personally, it's this band. It's that one thing you should be living your life for. Instead of letting it go by, just kinda thinking about it like, "Oh, what would happen if?" Why not just do it, you know? I have so many friends and relatives and stuff who talk about, "I wanna be a writer" or "I wanna do this, I wanna teach, I wanna do that," but they just talk about it all day.

Jack: I really like the dichotomy of the two words, too.

Chicken: Jack likes the words.

Drunk Dude 1: Tailgate party man. Woo hoo! [laughs]

Chicken: Enter drunk dude. This is always my favorite part of the interview when I read *Razorcake*. Some asshole comes in to the back like Paddy. Aren't you supposed to be Paddy from D4?

Drunk Dude 1: (Confused) Yeah.

Chicken: Shouldn't you be telling me how good The Arrivals records are or something right now? [laughs] Or how good the fries are at Triple Rock?

Jack: They are pretty good.

Adrian: So do you think your gonna keep going with the naming scheme, so the next record after this will be like *Polish Sausage*?

Jack and Nathan: *Jamaica Me Crazy*!

Chicken: We wanna do a 7" called *Jamaica Me Crazy*. Yeah, probably. We'll see. I think the title will be explained a lot more on the record. It'll make sense.

Adrian: Like you'll cover "Nellie the Elephant"?

Chicken: That's one of my favorite Toy Dolls songs. That's actually a good idea. Thanks for that.

Adrian: What were you guys unhappy with on the first one?

(awkward silence)

Chicken: Unhappy with? I dunno.

Jack: Nothing really.

Chicken: You just gotta learn from all of it. There are definitely songs we wouldn't play live because we're like… [Jack does an overwhelmed opera voice]. I feel there are some of those songs that we had to write to get to these other spots. There are some interesting riffs on that last record that I probably wouldn't write again, but that's where I was when we were all writing it. It just kinda worked out that way. There's nothing I'm unhappy with. I like that record. What are you unhappy with?

Adrian: Me? I dunno. I didn't live with the record for two years playing it. I've never really had complaints, but Todd has a couple I know of.

Jack: What was the complaint?

Todd: I was likening it to the Swingin' Utters *Five Lessons Learned*. I know the context of what your songs were written in, but I thought there could have been a difference in the actual recording of it. Like, the album goes as a solid mass. It's sometimes nice to slow your tempos down, bring in other textures and other riffs, and also the recording—I don't know much about producers and stuff like that—but just to give individual texture to songs and then have it all come together as an album. It's not really a complaint than it's constructive criticism.

Adrian: It's just that Todd's addicted to mosh parts.

Chicken: Right, right. You wait for the beatdown part.

Todd: No, I wait for the part where I just reassess my life and it's shit. [laughs]

Chicken: Yeah, totally.

Todd: I need to have something to repeat in my head, and it's usually something like, "Yeah, I'm fucked." That's the stuff I love.

Chicken: [laughs] I would agree with that. *Cuban Ballerina* was the first full-length record that I'd recorded where I felt like it was my baby. There was stuff we definitely were like, "It would be kinda cool if the

drums sounded like this on this song instead of like that," or "Maybe we could fuck with the guitar tones," but, also, we didn't have that big of a budget and not a lot of time in the studio. So next time you guys interview NOFX, you should ask them why they give some bands two weeks to record that are really good, and some bands four weeks to record…

Jack: That aren't so good.

Adrian: How much out of the year are you guys on the road, just a guesstimate?

Jack: We were on the road a lot for *Cuban*, I think.

Chicken: For the last two years, things have been pretty solid, but we're trying to slow it just a little bit now because there's only so much you can tour on eleven songs. I'm sure you get this all the time in your interviews, but gas is four dollars a gallon and shows in the Midwest kinda suck, you know what I mean?

Nathan: Chicago's good.

Chicken: Chicago's good, yeah. I dunno, like you run a fanzine, you know the deal. Like you guys went non-profit.

Todd: Sending stuff gets more and more expensive.

Chicken: Yeah, totally. It sucks for kids to come to shows. Sometimes, when we go out with bigger bands, the ticket prices are kinda steep. People don't want to drive because it's so far. It's unfortunate when a lot of tours only have like one decent band on them. I love it when tours come to town and it's like four rad bands. It's all the way around. The labels don't have any money, the producers don't have any money, we don't have any frickin' money, the kids don't have money.

Todd: The internet has the money, but it's not sharing it with anybody.

Chicken: Exactly, Rupert's got the money… Just for the record, Dan Yemin (Paint It Black) is throwing a football around the parking lot right now as we speak and I honestly thought he'd be a little better. I'm not gonna lie.

Adrian: He has a quarterback build.

Chicken: Maybe that's what it is. Maybe he's just not a quarterback. Maybe he's more like a wide receiver guy. What he lacks in throwing ability he more than makes for in front man abilities. That guy's one of the best man. I love him.

Todd: He has a really adept microphone hold for the mosh parts. He's like a surgeon.

Chicken: Like a knife, dude.

Todd: That's a critical mosh.

Chicken: That's a critical, crucial mosh part, dude.

Adrian: What was a place you guys just despised playing?



Nathan: The Christian frat house?

Chicken: Yeah, that would have to be the worst. In New Mexico. We were on tour with Teenage Bottlerocket, and the day before the show, one of the dudes in the band goes, "Yeah, it's weird that tomorrow's show got moved to a Christian frat house." And, I was like [makes screeching brakes sound] huh? And he goes, "Yeah, a frat house." And I was like, "Did you just say 'the show at the frat house'? Excuse me, something's not right here." Then later someone told me that it was a Christian frat house and I was like, "Fuck. Me. Are you guys for real?" And they were like, "Why? What's the big deal?" and I was like, "Well, okay, let's do this. We got there and the promoter kid was really nice. They said "no cussing." The guy got up before we played and started talking about bible study and stuff. It was bad news, man. I think I went over the line. I talked a lot of shit, and I got a few e-mails about it.

Ian: It got a little heated.

Chicken: I was more shocked that the kids weren't shocked, that the bands we were touring with weren't bummed or weren't totally freaking out that a bunch of punk bands were about to play a Christian frat house. I asked the promoter, "So this goes down all the time? You guys just have bands and no one's ever…" and he was like, "Man, we've had so many shows here and no one's ever said the things you've said." And I was like, "That's really sad. I'm really disappointed in punk rock as a whole."

Ian: Never play a show where someone tells you not to swear.

Chicken: Not to curse.

Jack: [Changing between parked cars.] I'm getting naked right here, you can keep this one going.

Chicken: I don't mind, go ahead buddy. Get naked.

Jack: Don't look!

Chicken: Me and Jack are totally cool like that. Me and Jack can take dumps next to each other and change and see each others dongs. It's fine, but Nathan gets really weird. I'm beginning to wonder if he's a "never nude." You know, like the dude who showers in a bathing suit and shit, like denim shorts.

Adrian: Like Mormons and their special underwear?

Chicken: Maybe, yeah. Well the thing is he's the oldest brother, and I'm the youngest, so I'm used to it. I was around… I almost said the sentence "I was around naked dudes all the time as a kid." But then I realized that that's not what I want to be saying.

Todd: [Laughing] That's not true!

Chicken: Yeah, that's not true.

Todd: Grew up in Turkish baths.

Chicken: Yeah, I like a lot of gladiator movies and Greco-Roman wrestling is awesome.

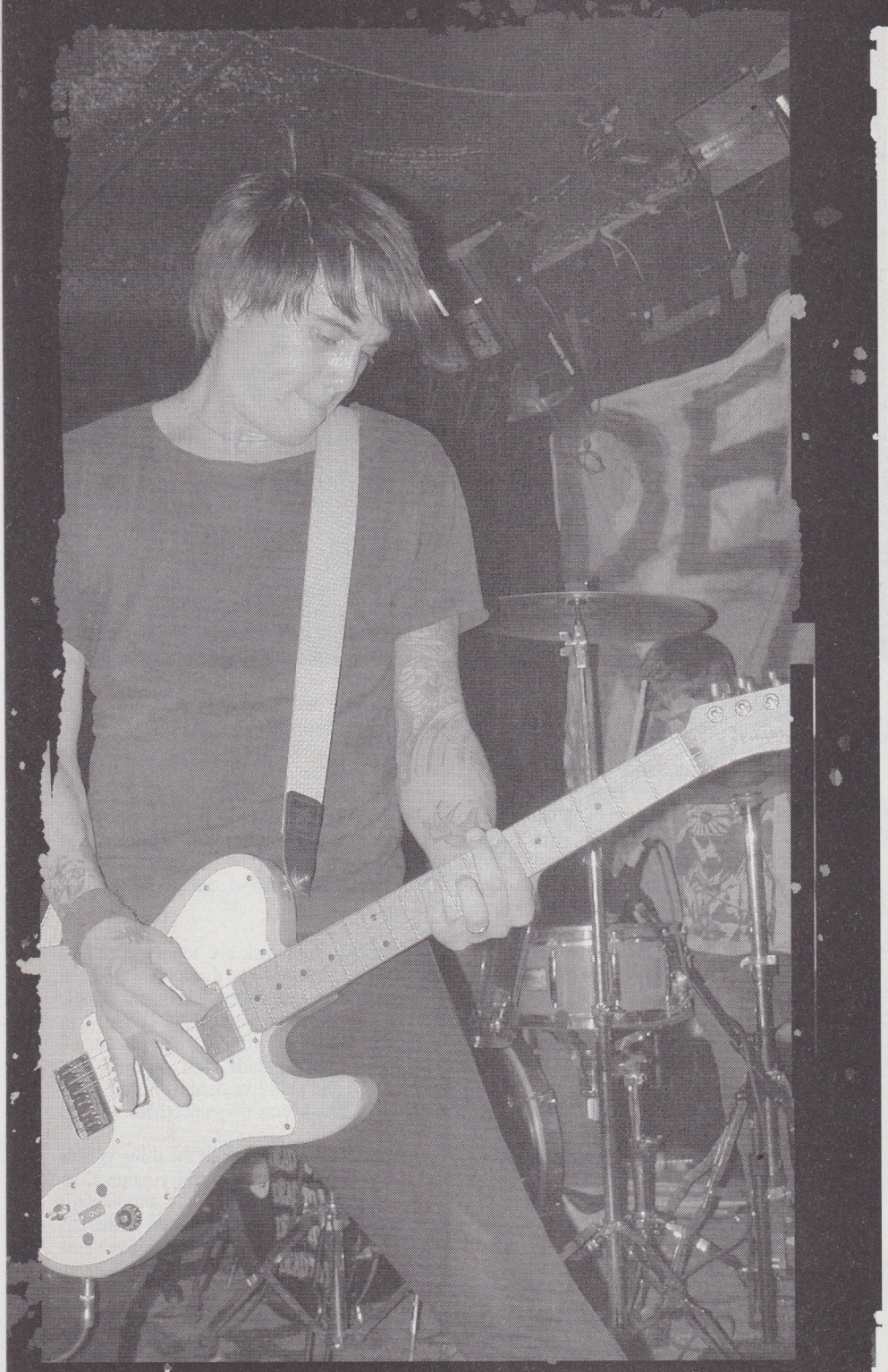
Jack: I don't mind nakedness.

Chicken: I don't mind nakedness either, bud.

Ian: Never play a show where someone tells you not to swear.

Chicken: Not to curse.

Jack: I'm getting naked right here, you can keep this one going.



Adrian: Have you guys thought of ever doing a special acoustic interlude; something to bring some class to the show?
Chicken: No! Class has nothing to do with Dead To Me.
Jack: Fat tried forcing that on me and Chicken and we were like, "Fuck. No."
Chicken: Yeah, they were like "You guys should do some acoustic radio performances." We were like, "Why? We're a punk band. If we wanted to play acoustic, we would have been an acoustic band." And, for me personally, I'm not a very good player or singer. **Jack:** Our voices would be weird.
Chicken: I'm not that self-important. I feel like a lot of those dudes are like," I love the way I sound acoustic."
Jack: "I'm the lone American songwriter."
Chicken: Hah. It's like, dude, you're a fuckin' punk dude who wrote some three-chord songs. Welcome to the fucking club. Know what I mean? No one needs to hear you sing your shitty punk song acoustic. That's me, personally, but maybe if I was more talented I would be into it. Who knows?
Jack: You're talented, Chicken.
Chicken: Thanks, Jack.
Adrian: I've heard you guys play "Hybrid Moments" live several times. Are there other covers you'd like to do, like some Hatebreed or something?
Chicken: [Laughing] …Hatebreed? I'll go on record right now and say that Dead To Me will never play a Hatebreed song. We don't lift enough weights, man, to be fucking with those guys. At least the Misfits, they lift weights, but they also like wear makeup and stuff, too.
Adrian: Maybe you should get Yemin to teach you.
Chicken: We should get Yemin to teach us, man. But he's a teddy bear, you know? He doesn't have videos where it's like him air punching the camera, you know what I mean? Dude, some of these new hardcore bands, dude, are *amaaaazing*. For fun, we get onto Youtube and we search for hardcore videos. There are hardcore bands that have the chorus that say stuff like, "hardcore!"… and that's the chorus. You're like, "Wow dude, really?
Jack: I see where you're going with this.
Chicken: Yeah, I'm not naming names.
Jack: It's good you bailed out of it.
Todd: What if you said the rest of the chorus?
Chicken: There'd be a goon squad at my door immediately.
Todd: You'd have a big, fat lip.
Chicken: Yeah, I really would. And I am afraid of those guys, but it's just like some different shit than we're about. But, I think as far as covers go, I like playing One Man Army songs a lot because I love that band. It's rad to hear Jack sing.
Adrian: Have you ever had a show where you play the cover, and some guy—who's still trying to keep it alive for '86 or something—will just keep yelling at you to play more covers?
Chicken: Yeah, and that's awesome. That's who we play covers for: that guy.
Adrian: Then he just yells at you to play more covers right?
Chicken: And that's fine. If I knew more, I would do it for him. But, there's always the seventeen-year-old kid with the Misfits shirt, and the Misfits beanie, and the Misfits Vans all at once, and then you play the Misfits song and he's like, "I got nothing. I've never heard this. Is this a Misfits song? I have no idea." And you're like, "Really? Huh, you dropped the forty bucks at Hot Topic for the entire Misfits fucking head to toe gear, but you don't know the 'Hybrid Moments' song?"
Todd: Well, it's all about the flair though. If you're flying three pieces of the same flair it, cancels it out.
Chicken: Yeah exactly. It's like the guy that has some old ass Misfits shirt, carried back behind his truck seat. That's the guy who knows all the lyrics.
Adrian: About the whole sobriety thing, is that hard to do on the road for you? A punk band doesn't really seem to be the best to support system for sobriety, unless you're gonna be in a straight edge band.

"Yeah, you were drinking a beer at seven in the morning."

I was like, "I was having a soda and it was ten in the morning.

It's been like three hours, asshole. How did that story get around already?"

Chicken: It's kind of like a double edged sword. There's a really big difference between sobriety, recovery, and straight edge. A lot of straight edge kids have never even drank or done drugs and they think that they're poison. I love drugs and alcohol. I don't think they're poison. I think that they're, arguably, my favorite thing in the world, and I can't do them anymore. Being in a punk band is really good for me because it keeps me out of trouble. I get to get that need met in my stomach that's crazy and kinda controls my life. It's that overwhelming obsession to not feel what I'm feeling, or to feel what I'm feeling ten times more. Punk bands are a good outlet for that. But there are also a lot of drugs and alcohol around. But, I want my life, you know. I'm nothing special. There are so many kids in bands that have really, really, bad drug problems and they're staying sober and doing their thing. If they can, I can.

Adrian: That's true. You don't have to write an "edge for life" song, but have you ever thought about starting a…

Chicken: [laughing] A straight edge band? No, no, I haven't. I can't afford Nike Dunks. I would just never want to tell anyone else how to live their life. I know what's right for me. I'm sober because it's right for me, but it's not necessarily right for everybody.

Jack: It's right for me too, Chicken!

Chicken: All right, Jack! It's right for Jack, too. Good times.

Jack: I like non-alcoholic beers.

Chicken: We do drink a lot of non-alcoholic beer. Kids who know that I'm sober will be like, "Dude you were drinking a beer on stage. You're busted, bitch!" And, I'm like, "It's non-alcoholic man, just let me hang out. Leave me alone."

Adrian: Do they really try to call you out?

Jack: He got busted in Berlin.

Chicken: I was drinking soda in Berlin out of a bottle, and I was walking down the street and someone later that day was like, "Yeah, you were drinking a beer at seven in the morning." I was like, "I was having a soda and it was ten in the morning. It's been like three hours, asshole. How did that story get around already?" I don' know anybody in Berlin. Crazy.

Adrian: You're on edge watch there. [laughs]

Chicken: I am, I am. Try to explain being sober in Europe. That just does not work. They're like [in European accent], "What do you mean, you don't drink the beers? Why do you not like beer? Are you a little girl? You don't drink beer?!" You're like, "Yes, I'm a little girl, and I don't drink beer."

Jack: [In same accent] "You don't have problem now."

Chicken: Yeah, "You don't have problem now. That was long time ago. Drink now with me!" And you're like, "Uhh, not so much, bud." And then this guy in England was like, "Well, what did you go to rehab for?" And I was like, "I was shooting coke, and I had a real bad alcohol and opiate problem." And he was like, "Unless you're shooting heroin, you don't go to fucking rehab." And I was like, "Okay! Good to know! You could of told me that before I dropped the ten grand on rehab, guy." I'm still paying that one back.

Adrian: You're from San Diego, right?

Chicken: I'm from San Diego County, but I'm from the town of Ramona.

Adrian: So that's like a suburb then?

Chicken: It's like a Northeastern, uhm, what's the English?

Jack: Unincorporated.

Chicken: Yeah, right. It's really shitty there, man. It's real hickish, a lot of farms. I grew up on a dirt road between a chicken farm and a dairy farm. That smell was awesome to live with everyday after school.

Adrian: So then when Blink-182 broke up, did it destroy your world?

Chicken: Yeah dude, I was bummed. It's actually funny, because I see Davey Tiltwheel all the time and when I was in high school, honestly Tiltwheel was one of the first punk bands I got into. I love that band. They would play parties and shows and Blink would open for those guys, and they were like the poser band from Poway that like none of the actual punks would want to see, and then everyone would watch Tiltwheel.

Adrian: What about you Jack, are you from the Bay?

Jack: This is a weird one. I was born in San Francisco and ended up going to high school in Arizona. Long and short of it, I moved back. Arizona, maybe. It's where you go to high school that it counts, right?

Todd: Where in Arizona?

Jack: Tempe. College town. It sucked. But, I do a lot of skateboarding, and that's what I did there.

Todd: Skated the Wedge?

Jack: Skated the Wedge! Scottsdale! So you know. You've been doing some skating in Scottsdale. And, I'm old and you look kind of old too, Todd, and you just did hand plants everywhere. [Jack shows off his hand plants.]

Chicken: Hand plant guy. I love that one.

Jack: And neutron jump ramps.

Chicken: Hell yeah, launch ramps.

Adrian: Do they still have that sandwich shop there in Tempe, where they just had the stuff from all the other stores? It was like Philadelphia Sandwiches?

Jack: You'd have to tell me streets.

Adrian: I just remember going there and it weirded me out.

Jack: I'm a Tempe gangster. I would know if you gave me streets.

Adrian: God, I can't remember where it was. My brother took me there and it was just like, "Aww, man the cups are from one restaurant, the napkins form another."

Chicken: That must have been a good sandwich, Adrian.

Adrian: It was!

Chicken: He's definitely asking about the sandwich shop in Arizona. That's awesome. He had a really, really good reuben rye. "Seriously man, really good. No, seriously, do you know the fucking address?"

Adrian: The best part was the fat guy that just stayed there, watching TV all day, and I don't think he cooked or anything.

Todd: I'm just gonna let lunch digest, and I'm gonna stay here for dinner. Don't need any plans.

Chicken: I ain't going nowhere. You know I'm gonna be hungry later. Why leave?

Adrian: Have you ever met Chckn from D.I.?

Chicken: No, I didn't even know there was a guy in D.I. named Chicken.

Adrian: There is, but he doesn't use the vowels.

Chicken: Really? That's pretty punk. Let's get down to brass tacks here, vowels are kinda poserish, you know what I mean? That's extra hardcore punk dude. That's some old school shit. Fuck a vowel, you know?

Adrian: I think you should get together with him, to start another band maybe.

Chicken: I'm really surprised there aren't more punks named Chicken. As far as animal names and punks go, I feel like there should be a couple more Chickens out there.

Adrian: What about the Chicken Ranch in Nevada?

Chicken: Guess what I did at that ranch to get it named after me? You know what I'm sayin'? Don't make me say it. My mom's gonna read this.

Adrian: Okay, Jack. So between Dead To Me, Swingin' Utters, and the Re-Volts, which is your favorite band to be in right now?

Jack: Dead To Me.

Chicken: Ding, ding, ding! Correct answer!

Jack: But Greg from the Swingin' Utters is here, so I better be careful.

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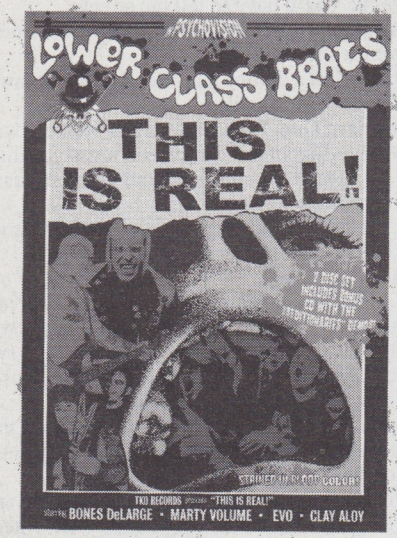
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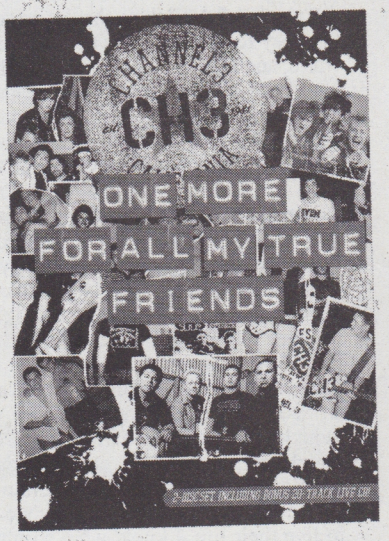
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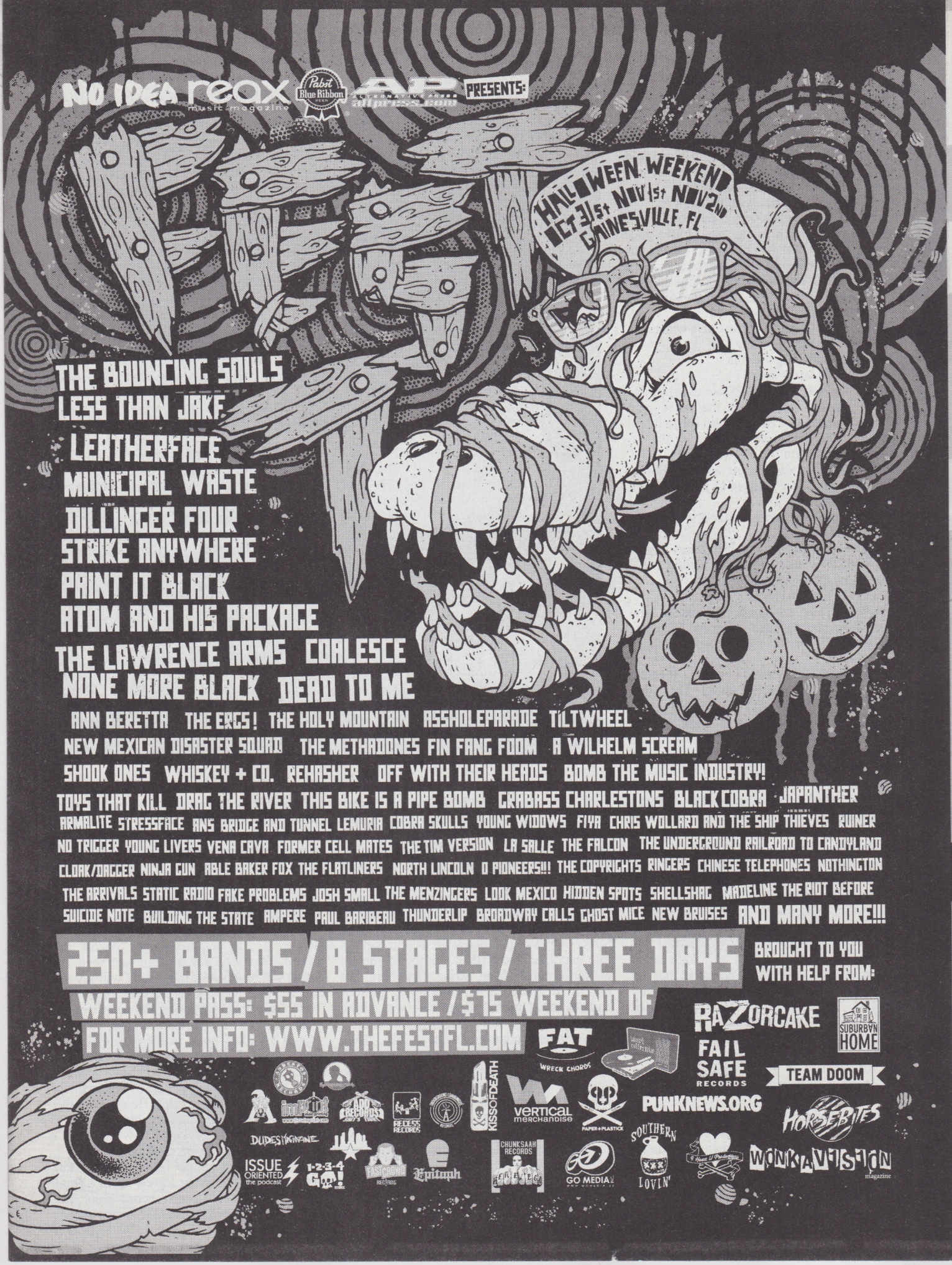
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Chicken: If he was close, It'd be Swingin' Utters.
Jack: No, It's Dead To Me. I love the Swingin' Utters. The Swingin' Utters made me want to start One Man Army. But, I love Dead To Me now… And I'm not just saying that because this tape machine's in my face. I really do.
Adrian: So a couple of people have told me, Jack, that your voice is like a total chick magnet. Would you say that was true?
Jack: Uhh… No. I don't think that it is.
Chicken: I think it's a person magnet. I think it's not just girls. Guys too, man. I love your voice. I love to hear you sing Jack, I really do.
Jack: Historically, my voice has never drawn a lot of chicks. It's drawn big, awkward dudes.
Chicken: I've seen 'em. Like the old One Man Army heads that come out.
Jack: Lots of One Man Army guys who come out to ask for songs are big.
Chicken: Yeah, larger items.
Todd: That's interesting.
Jack: They'll wear Lucky 13 and weird boots.
Todd: I know three ladies that have said, "Jack's voice is like butter, man. I love it."
Chicken: [laughs] "Like butter."
Adrian: I've heard the same things.
Jack: Honestly, I don't know what I'm doing.
Chicken: My sister referred to you, I think it was my sister…
Jack: That's my favorite; that it was one of your sisters.
Chicken: She said it sounded like "honey pipes."
Chicken: My sister's always telling me I need to eat more sandwiches.
Jack: I love sandwiches.
Chicken: They are good. You know who else likes sandwiches? Adrian. They're really good. There's a shop in Arizona that's really good.
Adrian: Is there a story behind the Russian guy on all the merchandise? The little hooded dude.
Chicken: Yeah, there's this book of like Russian prison tattoos, and there's a whole culture behind those tattoos. You have to earn them. Have you guys ever seen *Eastern Promises*? On the extra footage, they talk about that stuff and it's really cool. We had that design years before that movie came out. Then we saw the movie and we got a further explanation of those tattoos. They're political tattoos that you have to do crazy shit to get. And if you have them and you didn't earn them, you could get some serious bad times. We saw this thing that looked like—first of all when you first looked at it, you're like how's this not the cover of my favorite punk record—it's some old school looking shit that's super badass, and it says, "The president has no teeth, seize power, we are everywhere." And I'm like, "Wow, that's so much cooler than 'fuck Bush' or 'war is stupid.'" I got hyped on it. I was into it, dude.
Adrian: So when Brandon got switched out for Nathan on guitar, did that change the dynamic of how the band functioned or related with each other?
Chicken: There's just a different type of dynamic. Brandon's got his own thing going anyways. He owns a construction business. This band started for fun and it was all about having a good time, staying out of trouble, and just fucking around. We didn't think we were gonna be touring and releasing CDs.



Brandon was in for that ride, and it was really cool. Then once we started getting out of town and playing shows, it became much harder for him to run a business and do that. Then we found Nathan, who was like our long lost brother. That's what I consider the real Dead To Me, once we got Nathan.
Adrian: Where did he pop up from?
Chicken: I knew him through the Strike Anywhere kids. My other band stayed at Strike Anywhere's house in Richmond on tour one time, and Nathan was the roommate of the drummer from Strike Anywhere. We met there, and then we were going on tour and our other guitar player who was filling in was like, "I'm not going. My foot hurts." So we called Nathan and we were like, "Hey, what are you doing? We're going on tour with Strike Anywhere." We knew we could bribe him into doing it, because we were going with Strike Anywhere, his best friends. He was like, "fuck yeah." And once he started hanging out with us he was like, "You guys are total idiots too. Let's be in a band together. This is awesome."
Jack: He's a perfect fit. That guy's the shit.
Chicken: I love Nathan.
Adrian: Ian's your cousin right?
Chicken: He is.
Adrian: Does that mean you guys have some really tight connection that's not just there with other people? Like, I dunno, you play closer, lots of threesomes, or what?
Chicken: Threesomes? Jesus, man. What kinda band do you think this is? We, um… A lotta threesomes? Good god. That's what you came up with at home? Just like, you were thinking about me and my cousin just Eiffel Towering. Just bad news man, fuckin' a. I love that that image was put in your head. I'm glad I can be a part of that. But, I will say that me and him have a connection, even aside from Dead To Me, but just like people on the planet earth. Like, we share a brain. Literally, one of my main goals in life is to make that kid laugh. I think he's got the funniest laugh on earth. I love him. I would have a harder time being awake everyday if it wasn't for him. That kid fucking rules. He's my brother and I love him more than anything.
Todd: Tell us the story of how you sent a Polaroid into Fat Wreck Chords.
Chicken: Okay, when I was a little kid, remember I was saying I grew up in a small town? Well, the closest record store was Lou's Records in Encinitas. That was about a


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CHUNKSAAH RECORDS
GO MEDIA
SOUTHERN LOVIN'



Adrian: How come the only person I ever got to write to was a prisoner?
Chicken: I don't know buddy. I think you might be the best person to answer that one.
Adrian: So what's the most vicious unsubstantiated rumor you guys have heard about yourselves?
Chicken: That's a fucking good question right there. See, here's the thing I always bitch about interviews: "They always ask the same questions." But when they ask a good one, I'm always like, "Uhhh… I got nothing." I'll say on Jack's behalf that there was definitely an unsubstantiated rumor from a guy in a band that said that Jack was a talent-less hack. And that's an unsubstantiated rumor, because he's a talent-full hack. He's really good.
Adrian: If you guys were interviewing yourselves what's the one question you've always wanted to asked yourselves and what's the answer to it?
Chicken: Dang, that is a good question.
Jack: That's deep.
Chicken: That is really deep actually. Um, what would I ask myself? Can I please suck your dick? And the answer would be yes. Because if I could fellate myself, I think that I would be a lot less high strung, and I would be a happier dude over all.
Jack: If you could…
Chicken: If I could fellate myself. Yeah… Not like a clone guy style. Like if I could get like a 34 ½. Half of a 69. Like If I could do my own.
Jack: What would I ask myself? That's a tough one. Can it be like a whole other me?
Chicken: Like another guy I'm looking at? Okay, then I would ask the obvious question. How come we're the only ones with this technology to be fucking cloned right now. Why aren't there millions of clones everywhere right now?
Jack: But what if it was just like a whole another you?
Chicken: Yeah, that's like a clone guy.
Jack: What would you ask if he was standing right here?
Chicken: I would be like, "Dude, how did this fucking happen? Dude, there's two of us. There used to be one. Now there's two."
Jack: Let's hang out. Eiffel Tower, and then let's hang out.
Chicken: Yeah, Eiffel Tower, bro. [Jack and Chicken high five]
Todd: I always wanted to see what it would be like from this angle. Myself, all right!
Chicken: Yeah, totally.
Chicken: As much as I like to joke about like being attractive and wanting to suck my own dick, I think actually seeing myself, I could not handle the reality of that. I would be like, "Oh my god…"
Todd: My concept of myself is fallen.
Chicken: Yeah, you know, like, how you hate yourself.
Jack: I can't believe I just sucked his dick.
Chicken: And then you're like, "I dunno. I should kick his ass or something. I hate you."
Jack: I play online video games.
Chicken: Yeah, that's what Jack's question would be. "Hey dude, wanna play some PlanetSide? Hey dude want to play Eve Online?" This guy calls his fucking brother from touring to get his stats for Eve Online. And he asks his brother, "Can you train my dude while we're gone?"
Jack: That's fucking serious money, man.
Chicken: "He needs to work on his battle reflexes and his shield protectors." The best is one time…
Jack: It's lots of money, man. You guys don't even know.
Chicken: We're on tour and he's on the phone with his brother…
Jack: You fucking joke about it, but you don't even know.
Chicken: You're right, I don't know. He was talking to his brother about online gaming and there was like a pause for a second and then he goes, "…Shut up… Flamethrowers?" I was like wow. It sounded like all serious. I thought, "Fuck, Jack's going through some serious shit. I better go over there and try to console him." And he's like, "…Shut up…Flamethrowers?" Oh my fucking god, man. Amazing.

He was talking to his brother about online gaming and there was like a pause for a second and then he goes, "…Shut up… Flamethrowers?"

forty-five minute drive and I didn't have a license. I was thirteen. So I had to mailorder all my fuckin' records. My parents would give me like two or three bucks a day for lunch and I would save it. On Friday, when I would get home, I would go through all my *MRRs*, and all my catalogues, and the Dr. Strange catalogue, and order all these records. I started ordering a lot from Fat. They would send it the fastest. They would always send me stickers, fliers, and all this crazy shit, and I'd get so stoked. So then I started sending them pictures. One time I took my dad's truck and I tried to drive it and I crashed it into a pole. So I took a picture of that and I sent it to Fat, and I was like, "Hey I've been driving my Dad's truck around." Brian Archer wrote me back and he was like, "Keep driving." Not even like, "Don't steal your parent's car" or nothing, but like "keep doing it." I was like, "Holy shit. This is awesome." The rest is that I ended up moving to San Francisco later, interning, and working at Fat for years. I ended up being "that guy" who would write kids back, saying "keep driving" when they sent me pictures and shit.

TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE STAFF

Adrian Salas

Top Five Songs that Sound like Being on the Brink of Insanity

1. Rich Kids on LSD, "Think Positive"—A should-be positive message that becomes twisted into something... not so positive.
2. Black Flag, "Nervous Breakdown"—Anytime Keith Morris sings this live is an acceptable substitute.
3. Ruined Eye, "Land of Treason"—The Germs version is good, but both of these covers really ramp up the crazy.
4. Die Kreuzen, "Land of Treason"
5. Slint, "Breadcrumb Trail"—A really scary song about a roller coaster.

Amy Adoyzie

Stuff to Send Me Because You're Nice Person Who Believes in Karma. Amy Lam, c/o Omar Shareef Asian University for Women, House No. 7, Road No. 2, Khulshi Hills, Chittagong, Bangladesh

- Mix CDs (craving new music!)
- Trader Joe's granola bars and fruit leather
- An antidote to end this mean masochistic streak
- $10,832 (remaining student loan debt)
- Vapid celebrity gossip magazines

Aphid Peewit

- *Flipper, Live Targetvideo 77 – 1980-81* DVD
- Supersuckers free show in the Metrodome before a Twins game
- Plasmatics, *Beyond the Valley of 1984* CD
- Bob Log III & Scott H. Biram show at Triple Rock
- Hanson Brothers, *Gross Misconduct* CD

Art Ettinger

- Templars, *Out of the Darkness* 7"
- Underground Railroad To Candyland / Pricks, Split 10"
- Okmoniks, *Party Fever!!!* LP
- Sloppy Seconds, *Endless Bummer* LP
- 4-Skins, Live at East Coast Oi! Fest 2008 CD

Ben Snakepit

1. Sass Dragons, *Bonkeroo!* CD
2. The Estranged, *Static Thoughts* LP
3. American Cheeseburger/ Canadian Rifle Split 7"
4. Stymie, *Sourpuss* 7"
5. Trojan Records Skinhead Box Set

Buttertooth

1. *The World Is Flat* by Thomas Friedman (book). Explains why India and China are giving the U.S. a run for its money when it comes to tech jobs that can be done cheaper!
2. Altaira reunion show at the Ken Club Sat. Aug. 21st!
3. Extinct Animals, *War Is Terror* CD
4. Black Lips, *Good Bad Not Evil* CD
5. High fives and knuckles... fuck the critics and talking heads

Chris Pepus

- How I spent my Fourth of July: Sloppy Seconds, live at the Creepy Crawl, St. Louis
- Shattered Faith, live at Fubar, St. Louis
- The Criterion DVD edition of *Rules of the Game*
- *The Odyssey* (Mary Zimmerman's adaptation), St. Louis Shakespeare Company (play)
- Joe R. Lansdale, *Godzilla's Twelve-Step Program* (short story)

Corinne

Five Great Labels of Right Now

1. 1234-Go!
2. Thrillhouse Records
3. Dirt Cult Records
4. Small Pool Records
5. Snuffy Smiles

Craven Rock

1. *Doris* #26 (zine)
2. *The Gits Movie* (movie, duh)
3. Limpwrist, Black Rainbow, Bruise Violet, Godstomper, Lebendon Toten @ Gilman St.
4. Melanie, *The Best of Melanie* CD
5. *The Porcupine's Kisses* by Stephan Dobyns (book)

Cristy C. Road

Top Five Reasons Why I Didn't Move to San Francisco Yet

1. Carnal Knowledge
2. Cheeky
3. The Measure [SA]
4. The girl I was obsessed with who lived there is a fucking jerk.
5. The Pinhead Gunpowder show at Gilman St. last February is *not* going to happen every weekend.

CT Terry

1. Bleeding all over some papers and then sharting on my last day at a temp job.
2. All things Thin Lizzy (I feel an affinity with Phil Lynott because we are both half black and half Irish).
3. Solaris Earth Pipeline, *45s on 33*
4. gulliblezine.muxtape.com
5. My school being across the street from the *Married...With Children* fountain.

Daryl Gussin

- Sex Vid, *Tania* 7"
- Eddy Current Suppression Ring, *Primary Colours* CD
- Gentleman Jesse and His Men, Self-titled CD
- Audacity/ Thee Make Out Party, split 7"
- Henry Fiat's Open Sore, *Mondo Blotto* LP

Dave Disorder

Five Words that I'm Tired of Hearing; I Could Go on, but, You Know... 5 n' Shit

1. Chipotle
2. Upgrade
3. Wrap (tortilla, douchebag)
4. Street team
5. Hybrid

Dave Williams

Top 5 Books I'm Looking Forward to Annihilating at the Cottage!

1. Ken Dahl, *Welcome to the Dahl House*
2. Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation*
3. Ben Snakepit, *Snake Pit 2007* (YAY!)
4. Robert Eggplant, *Absolutely Zippo: A Fanzine's Anthology*
5. David Katz, *Solid Foundation: An Oral History of Reggae*

Designated Dale

Top 5 Songs at the Big Drill Car Reunion Gig on 08-13-08 in Huntington Beach, CA (with All the Original Members—First Time Together Live in Almost Seventeen Years!)

- "Swanson"
- "Mag Wheel"
- "Diamond Earrings"
- "Let Me Walk"
- "Annie's Needle"

Keith Rosson

They Don't Beat the Heat, But They Make It More Awesome

- Leatherface, "Ghetto"
- Gina Young, "Too Cool To Cry"
- Sirens, "Washington Street"
- Oswald Five-O, "On The Table"
- Tranzmitors, "Bigger Houses"

Kiyoshi Nakazawa

- San Diego Comic Con
- Vinyl monster toys from Tokyo (www.Gargamel.jp)
- Mike and Arielle's wedding 8/9/08
- I am 8-bit art show 8/14/08
- Sid Brown and Year Long Disaster HOB 8/8/08

All of us drunk passengers responding to the cop's question, "Have you guys been drinking?"

Jennifer Whiteford

• *The Wire* season five (DVD)
• Getting my tickets for The Fest VII
• Riding my big fat cruiser bike around the streets of Ottawa
• Wolf Parade, *At Mount Zoomer* CD
• Austin Lucas, *Putting the Hammer Down* CD

Jenny Moncayo

1. Joan Jett, *Bad Reputation* on Boardwalk Records. I play the record at least four times a day.
2. Riverboat Gamblers and Toys That Kill at Alex's Bar in Long Beach, CA (7/26/08)
3. Designated Dale driving a car full of us drunks home from the Gamblers show in Long Beach and the cops pulling him over and not being able to do anything because he was sober. And then all of us drunk passengers responding to the cop's question, "Have you guys been drinking?" with an emphatic, and in unison, "Yes!" It's great when you feel untouchable by cops.
4. The Ignorant (record release show) at The Scene Bar in Glendale, CA (8/9/08)
5. Going to "Looney Tunes on Broadway" at the Hollywood Bowl, which means watching classic Looney Tunes cartoons on the big screen while the LA Philharmonic Orchestra plays along to them.

Jimmy Alvarado

Scintillating Cinco
• *Kung Fu Panda* making a big splash at the box office.
• Todd 'n' Mary-Clare's most recent clambake: nothin' beats chatting with good friends, eatin' tacos, and listening to a punk band cover Aretha Franklin.
• Naked Raygun vinyl reissues: You can't play 'em in yer car, but they sure make your house sound swell.
• Titanarum: *Spastis Progressivus Aggressiorum*, 7" EP: screamin' thrash that doesn't sound like all the other kids.
• *Dancehall Troops III* comp CD: One seriously good comp.

Joe Evans III

1. The Steinways, *Gorilla Marketing* CD + Live.
2. Cheeky, *Choke on a Cheeseburger* CDR
3. Prohibition, *Sorry for the Inconvenience* 7" + Live w/ Acne Attack + Use of the word "Chucklefuck"
4. Banner Pilot, *Resignation Day* CD
5. Vena Cava, *Weapons of Mass Communication* CDEP

Josh Benke

1. Mayyors, *Megan's LOLZ* 7"
2. The Dutchess And The Duke, *Never Had a Chance* 7"
3. Jacuzzi Boys, *Island Ave.* 7"
4. The Rantouls, *Chug A Lug* 7"
5. *Searching in the Wilderness*, Comp LP

The Lord Kveldulfr

• Edward Gorey books
• The word "trundle"
• Root beer
• Fixing the gearshift on my car with duct tape
• The Library of Congress online catalogue

Maddy Tight Pants

Things I've Been Doing Every Day
1. Listening to the Onion Flavored Rings songs on the OFR/Future Virgins split EP!
2. Flossing (in honor of Crucial Youth! Positive Dental Outlook!)
3. Wishing I didn't have four jobs
4. Listening to my dad's old Francoise Hardy records
5. Eagerly anticipating fall (but holy crap, that sounds like an emo band), my favorite season!

Megan Pants

Top 5 Bands I Saw on Saturday
• The Arrivals
• Triclops
• Chinese Telephones
• Jetty Boys
• Ling Ling

Mike Faloon

5 Great Things About the Summer of '08
1. Maggie, age two, singing along with the Gentlemen Jesse CD
2. Binging on Kurt Vonnegut and William Kennedy
3. Going to a Mets game with the Wisconsin Punk Rock All-Stars
4. Finally realizing that the Measure [SA] are not merely a good band but, in fact, an excellent one
5. Discovering *The Wire*, a television show for people who hate television shows

Mike Frame

1. Dan Baird & Homemade Sin, Self-titled CD
2. Jazzman, *Now Again: Luv N Haight*, funk Comp CDs
3. Blessings CD / John Mellencamp: *Life* CD
4. Suspicions, Knack , Drag The River: live sets
5. Izzy Stradlin, *Concrete* digital Album

MP Johnson

• The Stooges at Terminal 5 in NYC
• The Germs at Blender Theater in NYC
• Pizza in NYC
• Going to *The David Letterman Show* in NYC
• Pretty much everything about NYC

Naked Rob (KSCU 103.3FM)

1. Totimoshi, *Milagrosa* CD
2. Fucked Up, *Year of the Pig* LP
3. Made Out Of Babies, *The Ruiner* CD
4. The Kung Fu Killers, *Fist of Fury* CD
5. The Yuppie Pricks, *Balls* CD

Nardwuar The Human Serviette

1. Vancougar, *Canadian Tuxedo* LP
2. The Jolts, *Haute Voltage* CD
3. Teacher's Pet, Self-titled CD
4. Various Artists, *Emergency Room, Vol 1* LP
5. Various Artists, *Funhouse Comp Thing Vol 2* CD

Nation Of Amanda

Upcoming Shows I'm Psyched for...
1. TheQueers
2. Samiam (i haven't seen them since 2000!)
3. The Night Marchers
4. Fun Fun Fun Fest in november
5. The inevitable zombie Ramones reunion tour (a girl can dream.)

Rhythm Chicken

• Hüsker Dü, *New Day Rising*
• The Barrettes (Milwaukee all-girl punk rock)
• The Blueheels (Appleton all-boy country punk)
• Toivo (Fish Creek roadsit rock!)
• Waking up in all the wrong places.

Ryan Leach

1. Kraftwerk, *Autobahn*, LP
2. Matt Hensley's part in *Shackle Me Not* (skateboard video)
3. 13th Floor Elevators
4. Buying rare records in Tel Aviv with my wife
5. Congratulations to Todd Taylor and Mary-Clare. Kick ass.

Sean Koepenick

Top 5 Bands I am Looking Forward to Seeing at Riot Fest 2008
1. DOA
2. TSOL
3. The Bomb
4. The Methadones
5. Teenage Bottlerocket

Steveo

1. Statues, pretty much everything they've recorded
2. Off With Their Heads, *From the Bottom*
3. Nobunny, *Love Visions*
4. Paul Westerberg, *49:00*
5. Sly And The Family Stone, *Whole New Thing*

Todd Taylor

• Eddy Current Suppression Ring, *Primary Colours* LP
• Dude Jams / Shang-a-lang / Gordon Gano's Army / Dan Padilla, 4-way split
• Young Offenders, "Big Man" b/w "Small Houses" 7"
• Estranged, *Entranced* 7"EP
• Gentleman Jesse, Self-titled LP
• The Heathers, *Lose It*, demo CDEP

Ty Stranglehold

Top Five "D" Bands
1. Devo
2. Descendents
3. Dead Milkmen
4. Dickies
5. Dillinger Four

Vincent

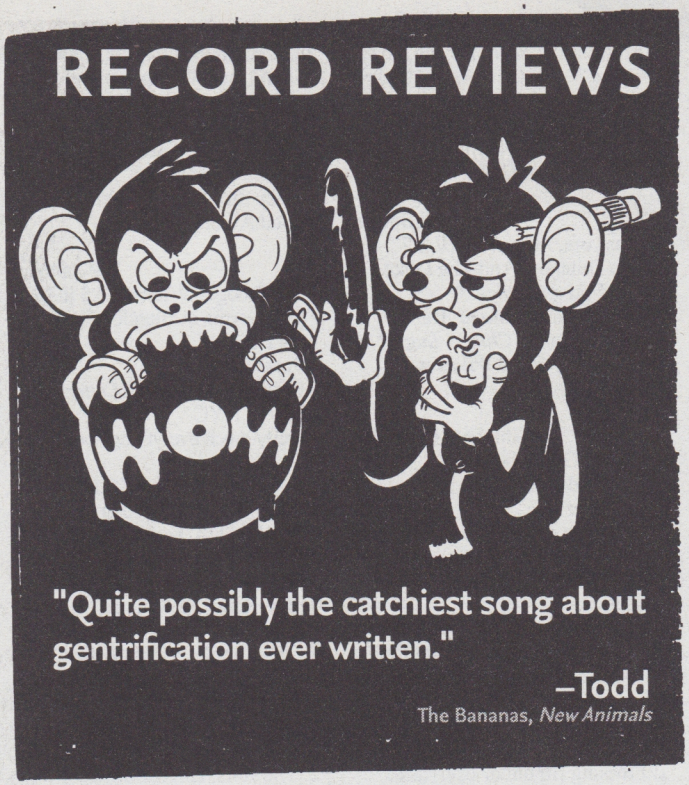
Top Five Things That Aren't Alex (girlfriend)
• Pains Of Being Pure At Heart, Self-titled CDEP
• God Equals Genocide, *Life of Doubt* 7"
• Dirt Cult/Fast Crowd 4-way split 7"
• Period Three Demos
• Tiltwheel, *Battle Hymns* LP + CD

Will Kwiatkowski

1. X-Ray Tech classes
2. David Bowie, *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars*
3. Canoeing
4. thrashermagazine.com message boards (redline)
5. The Hold Steady, *Stay Positive*

"Yes!"

RECORD REVIEWS



999: *Gimme the World:* 7"
They may look like a bunch of lager-loving football supporters, but Nick, Guy, Pablo and Arturo continue to soldier on. Sure, they had to withdraw from a few shows in May due to illness, but have several European dates scheduled. "Gimme the World" is a great song that sounds like something off the Weirdos *Condo* album. B-side track "The System" doesn't miss a beat and does some cool stop-start stuff with tricky vocals. Nice to see a band producing challenging material instead of pandering to an audience that probably doesn't exist any more. Could do without the lame romanticism of the last song, "Stealing Beauty." She's the prettiest girl in the world? Really? –Jim Ruland (Dr. Strange)

A.H. KRAKEN: Self-titled: LP
I know fuckall about these kids, but they make a mean racket that somehow sounds like a cross between early Jesus And Mary Chain and the Birthday Party funneled through giant aluminum tubes. Yes, that was a compliment. –Jimmy Alvarado (In the Red)

ADRENALIN O.D.:
***The Wacky Hi-Jinks of...:* 2 x CD**
Breakneck speed: check. Jabbing guitar: check. Rough but catchy singing: check. Lyrics about dead-end jobs, hating Trans Ams, smashing things in suburbia: check. '80s style hardcore literally from the '80s: checkity check. I remember hearing A.O.D. and liking them alongside D.R.I., early Bad Religion, and Government Issue, but not listening to them as much for some reason. Maybe they weren't doing anything different, but they do it good. This double CD for their twenty-fifth anniversary holds up: mad teenager lyrics and plenty of cool hooks. They are being sold as "wacky" and goofsters, I suppose for their fuck your parents lyrics, dicking around live, and the *Brady Bunch* cover, but this is solid stuff. Disc two is the best part, containing their full *Let's Barbeque* EP, comp tracks, and a live WFMU show in 1982. Suburbia has not gotten any better. Maybe another generation can be saved by hardcore. –Speedway Randy (Chunksaah, chunksaah.com)

AMEBIX: *No Sanctuary:*
***The Spiderleg Recordings:* CD**
U.K. anarchopunks who have been around a long, long time. This record is a remastering of the band's first three EPs from the early '80s that have been moldering in some basement for the last quarter century. I'm not an aficionado of this genre, but I do like such stylings, and, for the most part, I liked this record. It appeals to the sense of malevolent self-righteousness deep inside o' me and makes me want to break shit. But, there was nothing truly earth-shattering on this record for me. Not that it sounds like another pasty, one-legged entrant in the anarchopunk footrace, it's just that the record never made me sit up and take notice. It was great background music while I was reading a novel about World War I. But what the hell is with all that warbling on track six? It sounds kind of like the painy strains of a moose being dragged by the nuts from a snowmobile. Very odd, that one. All in all, this held my attention reasonably well, but there were a few misses for me on it. That's only a personal reaction, though; if you like Amebix, I'm sure this will be a welcome package. –The Lord Kveldulfr (Alternative Tentacles)

ANALS, THE: *Commando of Love:* 7"
The title track is an arty cross between, say, Monitor and The Normal. The flip is another bit of arty minimalism. Twenty-seven years ago they would've been regulars on *New Wave Theatre*, which means this is good in a "Gee, I don't hear stuff like this enough anymore" kinda way. –Jimmy Alvarado (Sweet Rot)

ANCESTORS : *Neptune with Fire:* CD
Meshing doom and psychedelia that borders on being spacerock at times. You seriously can't go wrong with that combination. Or maybe you could. Nonetheless, Ancestors execute the whole shebang with undeniable style. Seriously epic in composition. For a while you're on a heavy riff, and then it washes out into psychedelic guitar meanderings that conjured up images and memories of surf films from the '70s, mentally replayed in slow motion. Two songs that clock in well over ten minutes each. However, this is all conceptual, so each song takes on various moods to move you along the path. So damn good. –M.Avrg (Tee Pee)

ANDREW JACKSON JIHAD:
***Only God Can Judge Me:* CD**
If my CD player had a replay button, I would have pushed it. Instead I got off the couch on which I reside to press play over and over again. The album artwork is really great and features sketches of very cute little animals. It made me wish the cats with whom I share said couch were smart enough to appreciate that someone had written a song about them and their little mouse enemies. Maybe they would end the war, but then again we have Crass and look at us. Imagine early Against Me! (*Crime*-era) meeting Bright Eyes just to jam acoustic at the park over a couple of beers. The music is very sparse with usually just a stand-up bass and acoustic guitar, but this guy's voice is so raw and real; it grips your attention and doesn't let go. –Rene Navarro (Plan-It-X)

ANNIHILATION TIME:
***Tales of the Ancient Times:* CD**
Take a little later era Black Flag, Poison Idea circa *Feel the Darkness*, a tiny bit of Zeke, mix it up, and you have *Tales of the Ancient Times*. I like it. This hits me as the aural equivalent to the weird brothers in my hometown who were all grade school drop-outs who worked together in their parents' motorcycle repair/leather jacket shop. If they knew how to play instruments, this is the punk album they would put out (after a false start as a Steve Miller cover band). "Bald Headed Woman" really gets into some serious motorcycle rock territory like early Turbonegro. My personal favorite is "Coming to My Senses" whose descending riff makes it sound like the best track Black Flag left off of *My War*. This is a worthy skuzzy punk album, with just enough old school metal influence for those who like to sport denim vests. Put it on while riding dirt bikes through the neighbor's yards. –Adrian (Tee Pee)

ANTiSEEN:
***The Best of ANTiSEEN:* 2 x CD**
The year 2008 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of ANTiSEEN, the band that remains one of the most misunderstood in the history of punk. Formed in Charlotte, NC during the peak of the early '80s scene, ANTiSEEN went from being known as one of a handful of hardcore bands with an African-American member to being questioned by knee-jerk PC police for their camp usage of Confederate iconography. Many punk bands from that era reunited over the years, but ANTiSEEN is one of a few groups that continuously toured and recorded over that time span. This forty-song collection is a must for fans and a perfect introduction to ANTiSEEN for the uninitiated, showcasing their one-of-a-kind mix of comedic lyrics, Ramones adulation, heavy distortion, hardcore, and a pinch of country. Find a junior high school student in the family and give them this sucker as a gift. I fully expect to still be seeing ANTiSEEN playing shows in another twenty-five years: canes, walkers, and all. –Art Ettinger (TKO)

ANXIETIES, THE:
***The Next Mutation:* CD**
The bulk of the stuff mines the same early West Coast punk sound that The Briefs and many others have put to good use, with varying degrees of effectiveness. While most of the tunes easily fall smack into the middle of

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• Full album art is required for a review. Pre-releases go into the trash. Don't treat us like second-rate citizens. We're all volunteers here.

• Are you really sending us a download card to review? Seriously? That's weak. Many of our contributors don't have fancy computers. Nope, we won't review 'em.

• You're sending us a CD-R of a piece of vinyl you're releasing to cut on costs? Please don't pull that stunt with us. We know mail's expensive, but we send full copies of the zine as a thanks to all who send us material to review (if your address is provided).

•It is very important to put a postal address on each and every piece of music sent in. Many packages get separated and given to different reviewers.

• Over five years of music reviews can be found at www.razorcake.org. Use our handy "search" function on the site to see if your music has been reviewed. Tight.

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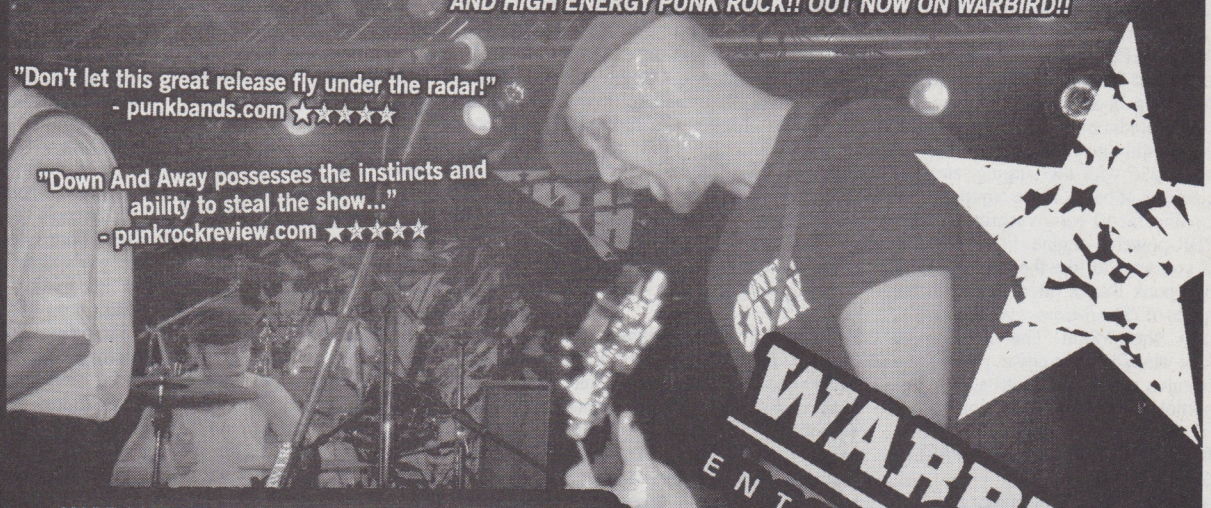
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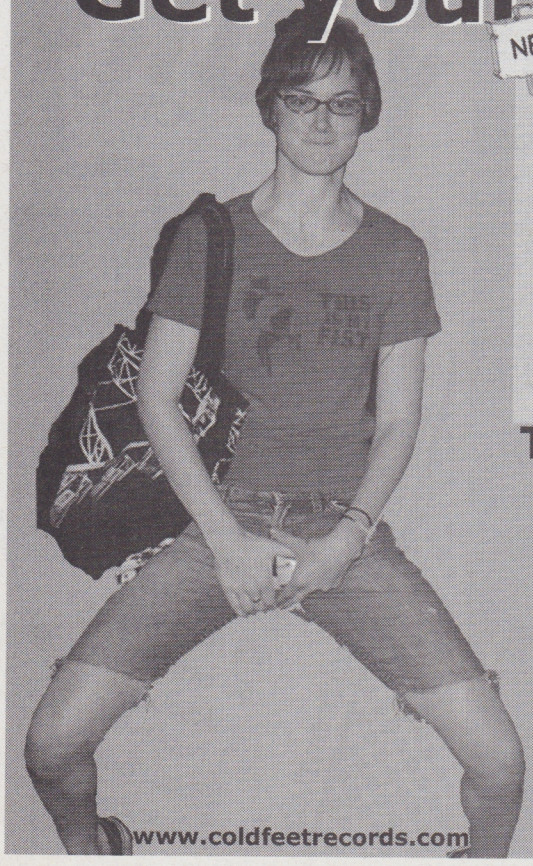
WARBIRD ENTERTAINMENT

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SUBWASTE/ TOMMY G & THE IDIOTS | *"SPLIT" DIGIPAK CD* | WARBIRD #002
THE NEGATIVES (SWE) | *"AT THE END OF THE ROPE" COLORED LP* | WARBIRD#004
HARBOUR 81 | *"LIVE YOUR DREAMS" DIGIPAK CD* | WARBIRD#005
LOUSY | *"ONE GOOD ROUND DESERVES ANOTHER" DIGIPAK CD* | WARBIRD#006

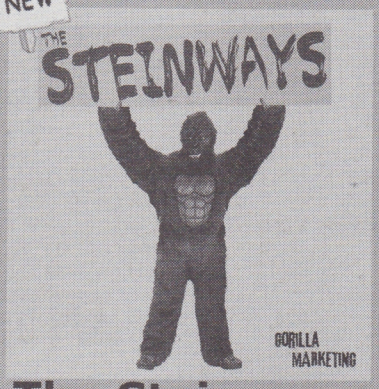
UPCOMING 2009 RELEASES: DOWN AND AWAY *"TBA"* (NEW ALBUM) & SUBWASTE *"TBA"* (NEW ALBUM)

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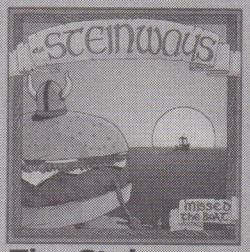
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the nondescript pack, when they are good, like they are on "Lab Rats" and "Gotta Getaway," they show a glimmer of the makings of a really good band. Cautiously optimistic about 'em, I am (and apparently prone to occasionally talking like Yoda). –Jimmy Alvarado (Lab Rat Industries)

ARM THE POOR: *Blurring the Lines and Slurring the Rhymes:* CDEP
Arm The Poor are from Tampa and play melodic punk that combines the urgent spit vocals and bass flourishes of Rancid with the surging, emotive elements of bands in the No Idea/post-Leatherface/Fest-swarming/Beard/PBR-powered-engine Florida scene. If you tend to like the beer chuggin' pop punk that is often lauded in the pages of *Thee Razorcaque Almanacke*, then show Arm The Poor some love already! The cover photo even features a coffee cup and a Guinness bottle! –CT Terry (Hold Tight!)

AUDACITY / THEE MAKEOUT PARTY: Split: 7"
Audacity: Nice bit of punky pop with a singer not afraid to put some oomph into his delivery. Thee Makeout Party: Jangly '60s pop by way of mid-'80s Redd Kross, as if Jeff 'n' Steve suddenly sold all their Kiss albums and instead went on a Byrds bender. Sounds lame, I know, but these kids are actually quite good at what they're doin'. Tip o' the hat to both bands. –Jimmy Alvarado (Burger)

AVERSE REACTION / TARGET SOCIETY: Split: CDR
Holy fuck! This is bad! The sort of shit you "would rather stand out in front of the club in the pouring rain than listen to one more note from that band" type of bad. Fifteen songs recorded live, and poorly at that. I think this is pretty much the same band with members doing different duties on either or… One band is limp rock, the other is even limper grind. Or something like that. Blehhhhhh. –M.Avrg (Frank Ross)

BAD SPORTS: *No Rest for the Wicked:* 7" EP
More primal thud-punk in the Rip-Off Records vein. "Ooh Ooh Ooh" is the definite highlight here. –Jimmy Alvarado (Big Action)

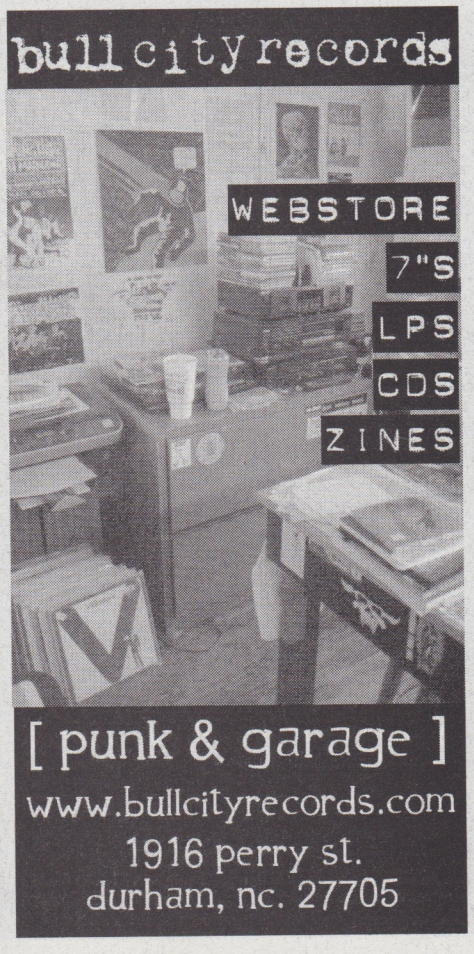
BANANAS, THE: *New Animals:* CD
Hooray! At this point, the Bananas could've easily coasted on past exploits. I mean, if you've already made the musical equivalents of The Statue of Liberty (*A Slippery Subject*) and the Grand Canyon (*Nautical Rock'n'roll*)—(these monuments are totally arbitrary; solely used for illustrative purposes due to their hefty landmark fame)—no one's gonna give you shit if the new record doesn't make a Mount Rushmore (without fucking over the Oglala Sioux). I mean, these three Sacramentoians basically made, and then perfected, a version of punk that's equal parts confectioner's sugar and cordite. It's as sweet as a Jolly Rancher, but as dangerous as a grenade with the pin already pulled in the hands of an infant. It's celebratory, raucous DIY pop that has the wonderful tendency to explode into unexpected chunks. I've put my level of trust in The Bananas on the same shelf as two long-standing underground bands that, last year, they went and upped the ante on themselves. The Arrivals' *Marvels of Industry* and The Tim Version's *The Decline of the Southern Gentlemen* are two hard-playing band's best records. Mind you, I already celebrated The Bananas entire catalog, but *New Animals* is the best album by one of my already-favorite bands. The lead-off song is quite possibly the catchiest song about gentrification ever written. Wahoo! –Todd (Recess)

BEAR PROOF SUIT: *B.Y.O.B.O.C.:* LP
Milwaukee's Bear Proof Suit would have fit in nicely on Beer City Records back in the day, not that Beer City isn't still alive and kicking. The point is that Bear Proof Suit plays that terrific crusty streetpunk that smelled up so many Midwestern basements in the 1990s. These twelve blistering tracks aren't tainted by any self-important pretensions and are so straightforward that there must be a catch. The catch is that straightforward, crusty streetpunk has never been as dumb as its detractors claimed. This album is a treat for us non-snobs and comes with a neat comic book, replete with lyrics. It'd be a good community-building project to distribute copies of the comic book and discuss them at a Sunday book group. –Art Ettinger (Repulsion)

BENARD / WORN IN RED: Split 7"
Beee-yootifully carved, spastic shit that harkens back to the days of 1993 or so, and I don't mean that as a burn. Both bands are running the screamo angle with such perfection, this could've come out on Gravity fifteen years ago and no one would've been the wiser—except there's a full-color cover here and no poorly typed insert with, I don't know, drawings of stars all over it. Benard reminds me of Staircase, which is probably a fairly obscure reference in these parts, but that's what I'm hearing. Worn In Red's song has no less than five screamo-epic sections in it and the vocalist could be a dead ringer for Mike Carter from Glass And Ashes, except this guy's slightly more decipherable. No information available whatsoever besides song titles, which is too bad, as it'd be nice to hear what these dudes are yelping about. Apparently, the label's folded since putting this record out; if you're into the genre and you come across this one in a bin somewhere, grab it up—both bands know exactly what they're doing. –Keith Rosson (Alaska)

BILL BONDSMEN: *Swallowed by the World:* CD
Boy, these kids keep gettin' better with each successive release. They're still kicking down some pummeling Midwestern hardcore, but the songs have gotten a bit more nuanced, often alternating between simmering rage and full-bore roar, often within the same song. Quite the impressive release, this, and a definite selection







to crank up to "stun" when you're sitting in line to use the last sixty dollars of your unemployment check to get a quarter tank of gas. –Jimmy Alvarado (Deadbeat)

BLACK AND WHITES, THE: Self-titled: CD
Pelle Almqvist was fired and Joey Ramone was hired to front The Hives. A fun album indeed. Good job, lads. –Mr. Z (Douchemaster)

BLACKBIRDS / BRAINDEAD: Split 7"
Blackbirds toss out two originals and a cover of "I Wanna Be Your Dog," which comes off more ironic than anything else. They fare much better on their own songs—dark and brooding hardcore stuff with some pretty goddamn serious drumming going on throughout. Band sounds like they'd be right at home on a Deathwish sampler, sandwiched between, say, Trap Them and Reign Supreme. Braindead follows up with two songs of their own—the excellent "4th and 26th" that shows they can slow shit down to a crawl and still sound mean as hell; the song's terrific and closes out with some of that Aussitot Mort/Amanda Woodward-styled octave note shit that just I can't get enough of. Then there's "Knives In my Eyes"—a quick straight-up hardcore song that's over before it wears out its welcome, followed with yet another Iggy cover, this time "Search and Destroy." Again, it's decent but doesn't really add anything new to the song—would've preferred if both bands had ditched the Iggy idea and given us another original instead, as they're both onto something. Complaints aside, some damn fine jabs being thrown. –Keith Rosson (Burn Bridges)

BLACKOUT: *Stop the Clock:* CD
They cop to a Poison Idea/Motörhead influence, and both are readily apparent from the get-go, but there is a copious amount of the blues stirred in as well. Strangely enough, though, I found the odd bits of gloomy metal they mine on three or so songs to be the most interesting here. –Jimmy Alvarado (Profane Existence)

BLACKSTRAP: *Steal My Horses and Run:* CD
Twelve songs of what can best be described as amped-up shoegaze. I know that seems like a stretch, but this band literally sounds like Jesus And Mary Chain or many Creation Records bands playing in double time. Overall, this is pretty strong fuzz pop with male and female-pretty trade-off vocals on a stoner rock record label. There is a lot to like here for anyone who likes their pop with some fuzz and not as blown-out or noisy as Swervedriver or My Bloody Valentine. –Mike Frame (Tee Pee)

BLOWBACK: *Living Vibration:* CD
Fifth installment from this Burning Spirits-style band. Sonic as hell. They attack full force in a near blinding fury. Tracks like "Left Hand," "Color Water," and "Crash" break up the wild pace without losing any momentum; shifting to mid tempo—in comparison to most of the songs—letting the rhythm come to the fore, and burning into your memory. Eleven tracks of all killer songs. Not one drop wasted. Essential, really. –M.Avrg

BLOWTOPS: *Brainshaker:* 7"
Mysterious, gloomy punk rock with keyboards and a deep sound; the garage noise that a decade of horror films, drawn curtains, and depression would make in a basement in Buffalo. "Brainshaker" is more punk rock electric shock, whispering lines like "Shake you outta your skin." While "Crime & Remorse" is a slowly burning fuse. –Speedway Randy (FDH)

BOYS CLUB: *Girls of Today:* 7"
The title track is decent power pop. The B-side felt like the song that comes on when you're dancin' with the chick (or dude) you wanna make it with, but then this song comes on that you really don't want to be dancing along to, but you need to keep dancin' if there's any chance of getting any action from said dude (or chick), and you end up doing this miserable side-to-side hop that pretty much guarantees you're going home alone again. –Megan (Douche Master, www.douchemasterrecords.com)

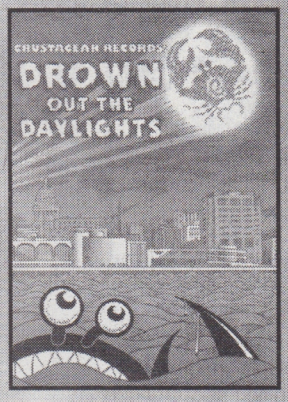
BRAIN DEAD / ROT IN HELL: *Millennial Psychosis:* Split 7" EP
Brain Dead: Grindy, crusty hardcore concerned with pro-lifers and the end of the world. Rot In Hell: More gloom'n'doom, this time with a metallic hardcore soundtrack. –Jimmy Alvarado (Vinyl Addict)

BRAINDEAD: *No Consequences:* CD
To their credit, these guys try to stir things up by soldering a smidge of pop sensibilities to the nouveau hardcore template, but ultimately the lack of conviction inherent in said template results in something that'll probably appeal primarily to the scads of kids who think Hot Topic is the punkest fucking place on earth to spend twenty-five dollars on a Converge T-shirt. –Jimmy Alvarado (Burning Bridges)

BRASILIA: *A Life Desired:* LP
When this record is playing, everything in my world is suddenly cool. Something about this music... Brasilia tread in territory similar to Broadcast and Stereolab. Synth driven with real back up instruments. The songs float in a trancelike shoegazer way with droning keyboards, dream-like female vocals, and throbbing bass lines. There is a haunting tone throughout that pulls you in, and puts you in the moment. I could, and do, listen to this for days on end. –M.Avrg (Obscurist Press)

BROKEN: *At the Border:* 7"
They say this slab of (gorgeous clear blue) vinyl is "dedicated to any band that has had to deal with tight-assed customs and immigration officials at bullshit border crossings. Music has no boundaries." For my sake, I'm sure as hell hoping Chicago just got some of those fancy borders. A waste of a (physically) beautiful record. –Megan (Vex)

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BUDGETS, THE / BUST!: *Destroy Modern Rock/Improve Modern Rock:* Split 7" EP
Budgets: The opening salvo, "City of Devils," is a nice, catchy bit of punk rock. The next tune ain't quite as catchy, but does the trick well enough, especially considering they're apparently a two-man outfit. Bust!: Aggressive alt-rocky punk stuff. Recording's a bit thin, but there's enough of interest coming through to leave the impression that they're probably be interesting live. –Jimmy Alvarado (Cassette Deck)

CARRY-ONS, THE: *Is Anyone Listening?:* CD
Nashville's Carry-Ons are a very simplistic, stripped down political melodic punk band with a slight ska influence. There's a dark, morose quality to the vocals that I like and this is a solid release overall. Listening to The Carry-Ons is like eating above-average, regional fast food. You're glad you didn't go to Burger King, but you're still eating a fast food burger. –Art Ettinger (Stik Man)

CATCH YOUR BREATH: *Life & Sounds:* CD
Pretty decent outing—eight-song howler of a hardcore record that speeds through and gets the hell out with little flourish or fanfare. What comes to mind is a mixture of the density and shooting-for-epics of Modern Life Is War and the heavy nod to Motörhead-rock that Burial's full-length gave us. They don't quite meet the stature of either of those bands, but it's not for the lack of trying. The best thing they've got going for them is the fact that they don't try and drag stuff out with wanking solos or lengthy intros that attempt to be all atmospheric but usually just come across as boring. This is some no-frills stuff, which works in their favor. Though the fact that they entirely discard said approach in the last song, "Don't Let the Shadow Touch Them," in lieu of that aforementioned note-heavy, drawn out, balled-style definitely doesn't work in their favor and ends the record on a pretty lackluster note. –Keith Rosson (Dismantle)

CHEAP TIME: *Handy Man:* 7"
Every now and again, a record reviewer can be reminded why they put up with daunting task of writing endless slander about the steaming piles of record refuse dumped into our review piles. It's a good thing I already have plenty of resale items to potentially fund my alcoholic leanings because this here record will not make the drive to the used record store. Cheap Time, who I believe just released a full length on In the Red Records, offer up two garage pop gems with all the right amount of fuzz and distortion in the tradition of bands like The Stooges and Red Cross, but also with a hint of the garage power pop of bands like Teengenerate and The Potential Johns. –Dave Disorder (Douchemaster)

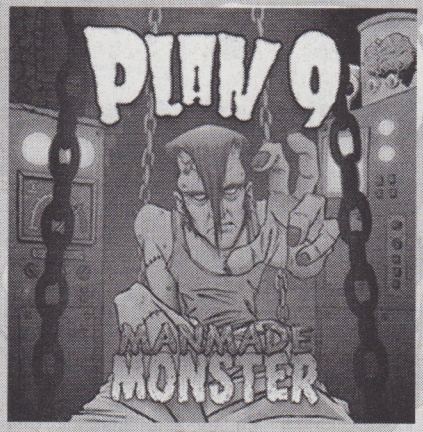
CHEAP TIME: Self-titled: CD
Four words: Falling Down, Ginger Snap. Buy the record and know what I mean. This ain't no decoder ring marketing gimmick to tell you to be sure to drink your Ovaltine. I get nothing out of telling you which records are worth a damn. Here is a little story that to prove it. So I totally fuck over *Razorcake* every month by not doing my reviews because listening to seven records that suck monthly sucks. But every now and then you get a diamond in your butthole. A sparkling little turd that peaks your interest and turns out to be valuable. In fact, a friend sent me a text message warning me how awesome this record is. It actually got me excited to do my fucking record reviews. That never happens, unless Todd yells at me. Cheap Time is awesome poppy garage shit that is so flamboyant and redundant you can't help but mouth the words to the chorus you can't understand. Not surprised to hear another solid gold motherfucker from the motherfuckers who brought us King Kahn And The BBQ Show and the Jay Reatard. What? You don't have those records either? Fuck you. Stop wasting my time. –Gabe Rock (In The Red)

CHEEKY: *Choke on a Cheeseburger:* 7"
This is easily one of the best records I've heard this year, and a debut record nonetheless. A primarily female band, Cheeky should fit in nicely for fans of The Measure or This Is My Fist, but by no means is this a copycat band. Cheeky does their own thing, punk as shit, but not necessarily breakneck. Just kind of deliberately badass. Top that with a twenty-year-old New Yorker girl (or two) screaming at you, "You namby pamby! You fucking twinkie!" And the charm is not lost on me. –Nick Toerner (Freedom School)

COCKSPARRER: *True to Yourself:* 7"
Two previously released tracks, the title one from their most recent album and the flip a live version of "Chip on My Shoulder" from the *Runnin' Riot Across the USA* album. Although both tracks are fuggin' great—c'mon, it's Cocksparrer we're talking about—I kinda wonder if it's worth the effort to hunt this out if you've already got both those discs, unless yer some kinda collector, or like singles with pictures of punk rockers on the cover. –Jimmy Alvarado (TKO)

COLA FREAKS: Self-titled: EP
Really good stuff here. Guitar-driven punk rock similar to the Vicious and Observers with its straight forward approach and overall flow of the songs. More about mood than bashing you over the head. "Ingenting Set" opens up with a mid tempo pace and a little bit forlorn melody. "Gi Mig Piller" is the most upbeat of the three songs and "Ctrl Alt Delete" closes off somewhere in between: upbeat and introspective. Worth seeking out. –M.Avrg (Hjernespind)

COLD ONES, THE: Self-titled: 7"EP
A Gainesville dude band. (Even if I'm wrong, geographically, the sonic geography checks out.) And I mean that in a good way. You get the feeling that they love Tom Petty and would fight for decent Merle Haggard tickets,



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but feel more comfortable playing straight-ahead (on first listen) good-weird punk (Fay Wray, The Nervous Dogs, and Watson come to mind). It's got the feeling of open air flea market, Florida-sized cockroaches, flatland underdogs in flip flops playing in a bar where most of the clientele have knives clipped on them somewhere (for either work or "protection."). The Cold Ones don't blow me away, leaving me in the middle of the street without my clothes, but I really enjoy their three songs, and I have a feeling I'll be spinning this 7" often. It's like sitting down at a bar and being happy that the locals are already there. –Todd (Sooooo Intense)

CORPUS DEI: Self-titled: 10"
I'm not exactly sure what genre I should determine this is. I'm guessing it's a bit of doom, sludge, hardcore, and metal. One thing for sure is that the music is mean, dirty, and vile. Its mixture of tempo changes makes it feel like a combination of panic attacks and emotional depression. Dirty, bottom-heavy Sabbath riffs bring forth the sense of evil. Blasting fast parts charge at your face like a windstorm. Vocals are yelled and shrieked to emphasize the overall madness. I started out in a decent mood but soon got very agitated listening to this. Pretty good result, I say. –Donofthedead (Feral Kid)

CRAPPY DRACULA / SONOROUS GALE: Split: 7" EP
Both bands here sound like their tracks were taken from some long-lost '80s cassette compilation of obscure bands that never really did much more past contributing tunes to cassette compilations. Neither band is bad, per se, so much as not really managing to put across something with much lasting impact outside of, in the case of Sonorous Gale's contribution, a vaguely Hole-like feel. Could totally be the recording quality, but this just ain't workin' for me. –Jimmy Alvarado (Crappy Dracula World Headquarters)

CRAPPY DRACULA: *My Ass:* 7"
Twelve-year-old dudes with acne who lock themselves in their bedroom while playing video games online might think Crappy Dracula are wicked funny. Me, not so much. How many songs about a fat guy rolling down a hill does a dude have to hear in his lifetime before he doesn't find it hilarious anymore? The answer is one. One time. If I wanna laugh at something stupid, I'll put on *Weekend at Bernies*. –Dave Disorder (Crappy Dracula)

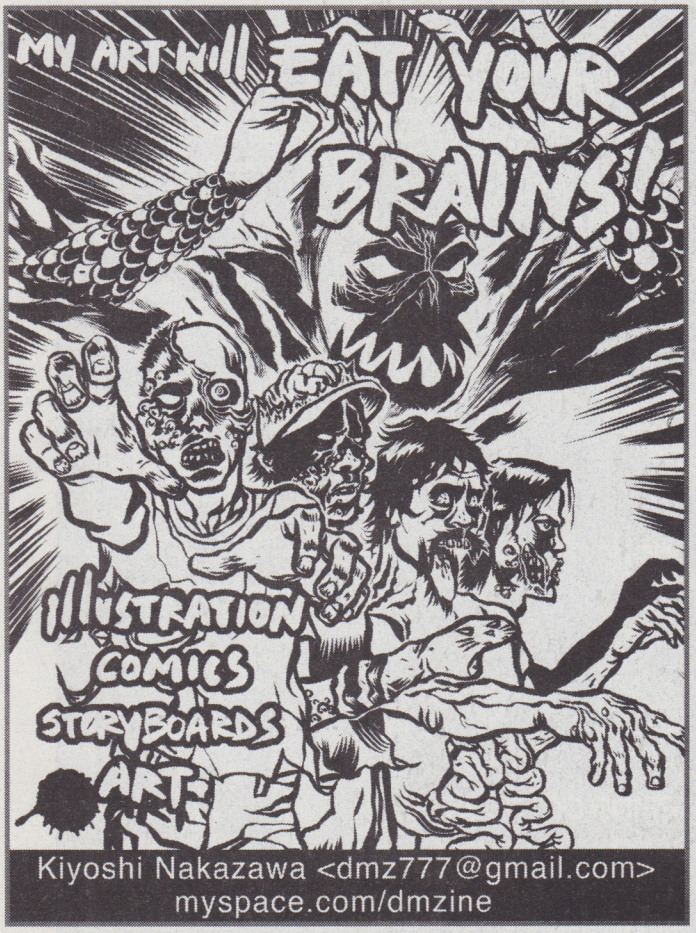
CRAWLERS, THE: *I Hate Michael Vick:* 7"
Ah, fuck yea! The hidden gem of my bimonthly *Razorcake* package. This Portland, OR punk rock band serves up three fast songs that are clearly influenced by '80s hardcore, but rise above the gazillion bands aping Black Flag these days. To compare them to a band that's currently got a bit of a buzz around them, I'd say that The Crawlers have a Cloak/Dagger sound to them, a sound that's rooted in classic hardcore but brings in elements of stuff like Toys That Kill. Ignore all of my name dropping nonsense if you want, but the point is that this is fast and catchy as shit. I'll be picking up their full length ASAP. –Dave Dillon (Blind Spot)

CRETEENS: *K-Way Bleu:* 7"
Hot damn. Edgy, biting, dirty punk songs with all the catch of power pop hooks inside the dirt. The vocals and bass sound like they were recorded in my car trunk on the freeway, the guitar sounds like the scraping of my brakes, if my car could play chords. Drums? Potholes. Maybe if Supercharger was a Teengenerate cover band, you could get something this melodic out of the gutter. –Speedway Randy (Boom Chick)

CRIME DESIRE: CD
Despite the cheesy lyrics—c'mon, you guys seriously have a song called "The Vampire's Spell?" Seriously? And songs about "Satan's bride" and "Satanic hordes against Christ?"—this CD collection of various releases actually kind of rules. At least the first half of it does. Comprised of their newest full-length, an EP, and then an LP from 2005—in reverse chronological order—the first sixteen songs vaguely smoke in the same dark, menacing way that Born Dead Icons do; heavy on the doom but still with enough melody and rocking undercurrents to keep the listener interested. It's when you get to the last LP that things go south really quickly; the music's much more thrash-based—which in this case translates to more boring—and the singer goes from using what sounds like some pretty unique double-tracked vocals to just straight out high-pitched screeching. *Really* high-pitched. The difference between the EP and the ending LP is substantial, and not in a positive way. This is a band that's definitely gotten better with age. –Keith Rosson (Life's A Rape)

DALETH / BLUSHIFT: Split: CD-R
On one hand, nice work on recycling the packaging of old dollar-bin records for this release, especially with the awesome green on gray silk-screened cover, though I was a bit disappointed to just find a CD-R inside. As far as the music itself goes, Daleth's got a riff-heavy thing going on, somewhat like dark stoner rock ala Sword or The Fucking Wrath, though with a bit more speed thrown in there and a recording that's pretty more ragged than those bands. Still, not bad, especially considering it's one dude doing everything himself and he laid the drum tracks down first without having any idea what the rest of the music would sound like. Blueshift is one woman hammering it out on a violin—the resulting cacophony is loud and abrasive enough to peel skin. All told, there are some interesting ideas at play here, sonically and visually, but it's still a bit too cerebral for my tastes. –Keith Rosson (For Documentation Only)

DANIEL JAMES GANG, THE: *In This City:* CD-R
As much as I love the Chinese Telephones songs themselves, there's something to be said about seeing



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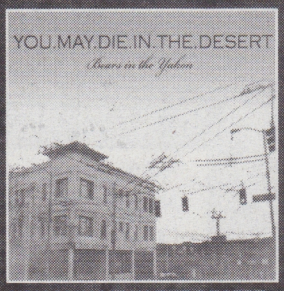
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them live, and watching Daniel James go wild with his guitar. He can say he's "not that good" all he wants, but he's got his own thing going on, and he pulls it off, and well. This solo band of his is definitely more in that vein, I *want* to say "like Led Zeppelin, Rolling Stones, and such," but ultimately I have to come clean and say "the stuff I wrote off up until a while ago (still do to an extent) because it's not punk." But yeah, it's very classic/garage/power pop influenced stuff that's pretty cool, and I think "No Reason to Stay" is my favorite song on it. –Joe Evans III (Self-released)

DAYLIGHT ROBBERY: Self-titled: 7"
I usually like to refrain from being completely obvious in my comparisons, as if my life of intense music nerdery dictates that comparing the male-female vocals of Daylight Robbery to, say, John Doe and Exene Cervenka, is a total cop-out. Nerdy pride aside, the fact of the matter is that this band truly sounds like a slightly less rock'n'roll version of X, and they also happen to totally rule. This definitely *does not* sound like a debut release. These are tight, well-crafted songs steeped in the sound of early '80s Los Angeles post punk ala the aforementioned X and *Fire of Love*-era Gun Club. It's actually somewhat surprising that this band is from Chicago and not L.A. Really cool, moody-yet-upbeat stuff. –Dave Williams (Residue)

DEAD MECHANICAL: *A Great Lie:* 7"
Why the hell isn't Dead Mechanical full-length on vinyl yet? There, now that I got that out of my system—this 7" is fucking great. Melodic punk that's a little soft around the edges. Like if the Monikers started as a Gin Blossoms cover band. Anybody who's done their fair share of Jawbreaker praise, but recognizes the band as one more stone in the foundation of contemporary punk rock and not the end all of everything righteous, will most certainly get a kick out of this record. –Daryl (Sex Cells)

DIALS, THE: *Amoeba Amore:* CD
This is a supremely enjoyable pop punk with great girl group vocals and keyboards. Think the Soviettes with a little more power pop in their veins, or the Epoxies with less sci-fi. Songs like "Antonio," "Amoeba Amore," and "Joe Lies" are really fun upbeat numbers. A few of the songs, like "Aim and Shoot" and "Sharp Teeth," are moodier and darker in tone. This isn't a bad spot in the record, since every song is supremely listenable. There's also a cover of Foreigner's "Urgent" which, by all means, should suck but instead deconstructs the song so it sounds like an awesome lost B-52's and Devo collaboration. Check this stuff out. –Adrian (No Fun)

DIGITAL LEATHER: *Sorcerer:* CD
My parents only bought Greatest Hits records of bands. When I was growing up, I thought Seals and Crofts, Chicago, and Waylon Jennings only had one record each, and it was amaaazing. Finally I have a Greatest Hits to give to my kids. A-side equals (some of) the best DL songs from years of tons of albums from him. B-Side equals other best songs live, recorded quite well at Gonerfest. Math says an incredible record I'll be playing heavily. DL often feels like '80s new wave electronic vibes and Bowie dramatic voiced lyrics about robots and club assholes ("Hey there Mr. Happy / what you smiling about / did you sell out to the lie / that you're really important"), but with real darkness. The garage punk spirit makes DL rough and lovable a la The Screamers and other bands that made minimalism genius—DL's cover of The Urinals "Hologram" is the best version of it since the original, catching all the raw modern desperation. If the studio side doesn't have enough noise for you, the live side is vicious. My parents had plaid pants and ELO. I have black and Digital Leather. –Speedway Randy (Goner)

DIRTY LOOKS: 7"
Now-defunct (I think) band who had former members of Bent Outta Shape. Too bad because there's some pretty good stuff here. Vocals kind of like Lefty Loosie's Addie (especially on "Theifs"). If they are still around, I want more. –Megan (Iron Pier)

DONNER PASS: *Demo '08:* CD-R
Postpunk five-songer with a heavy nod to Wire's instrumental interplay and jagged edges, except for what is apparently their party track, which is the same as their band name and sounds like a raved-up "Louie Louie" with Matt Freeman singing. There's something to be said for a band that sings, "Once again I see three severed heads" and makes it sound like a pretty good time. Given a brighter recording and a bit more of an aesthetic appeal—I know it's just a demo but there's just about no info here whatsoever besides the song titles and a really pixilated cover—I could find myself coming back to these songs more than a few times. –Keith Rosson (Donner Pass)

DOPAMINES, THE: Self-titled: CD
I threw this on while sitting on the back porch with my roommate. About thirty seconds into each song, one of us would say, "Wait...this is ripping off (fill in some name or another)." It's one thing for that to happen once or twice, but it was every song on the entire album, and not just a riff here or a line there, but we were fully singing other songs on top of theirs—cadence, melody, everything fit. I'm not sure if it was a strange homage (especially to Toys That Kill on the second track, "Molly"—there's no way it could just happen to be that close) or just blatant stealing. And, I do understand that pop punk is a well-traveled path with lots of familiarities between bands the more you listen to it, but there are tons of bands out there throwing in their own twists to make it their own. It's not that I don't like this, actually I do, but I just wish it had a bit more (or really, any) of its own voice. –Megan (It's Alive)



DOPAMINES, THE: Self-titled: CD
It's like a calculus equation. Scratch that. It's like simple math. (DIY, non-Warped, non-hair product) pure strain pop punk = girls + bubblegum + varying degrees of Ramones +/- Beach Boys. Some recurring variables have popped up in the '00s. Sickness, snot, more drugs. (And the Queers/Screeching Weasel abacuses.) At the top of the ledger are the considerable likes of The Copyrights, and on the edges (incorporating more than just a pure strain, which, history shows, will make them more resistant) are Off With Their Heads, Dear Landlord, Banner Pilot, and The Chinese Telephones. The Dopamines know the confining walls of pop punk well, and instead of contentedly stuffing the listener into a small box, tinkering with thread-bare riffs, and clumsily figuring how the male end of one cliché fits slides into the female end, they sound like they're having the times of their lives, playing to a sweaty basement of wigging-out friends. That energy and the precision how they play make this record a fun, strong listen. –Todd (It's Alive)

DOUBLE NEGATIVE: *Raw Energy EP:* 7"
On top of the pristine heavy-weight vinyl and intricate packaging, this 7" contains nothing but full-blown, teeth grinding hardcore punk. Like a lingering hangover, it makes you want to punch yourself in the face, if nothing else but for your own good. In times so contaminated with disgusting human traits, watching this clear vinyl spin around circles to the soundtrack of complete anger is pretty damn close to purity. –Daryl (Sorry State)

DUDE JAMS / SHANG-A-LANG / GORDON GANO'S ARMY / DAN PADILLA: 4-way Split 7"EP
Dude Jams: Wow, an unreleased Toys That Kill song. I kid, I kid, but, fuck, son, it sounds like Todd Congelliere singing—I can almost see him swallow the microphone at the end of the song. I like it, but it wouldn't hurt Dude Jams too bad to make their own sounds. Shang-A-Lang: Dudes are still bummed and wrapped in existential anguish. The song asks: Life don't mean shit, so why get out of bed? Answer: to make DIY anthems for the dispossessed. I swear, if there wasn't a lyric sheet, you'd think they'd be singing about how fun their last bike ride was. Gordon Gano's Army: Flawless mid-pace, melodic British punk (from Britain, not just sounding like it) that's got that effortless Smalltown quality to them. Clean, anxious, and on target. Dan Padilla: Yeah, pretty much hoard all you can by these dudes. Lyrically, their song takes a look at the pressures of developing an acute assholeishness in order to curry the favor of one's father on the football field into a mini-epic of a song. The math's right. Two-thirds of Tiltwheel, with a Gene spliced in, and they haven't done an ass song yet. –Todd (Fast Crowd / Dirt Cult)

EASTFIELD / DESTRUCTORS 666: *Labor Omnia Vincit:* Split CDEP
All around solid seven-song split from these two U.K. punk bands. Eastfield are up first, playing English '77-style punk (however, this Yankee tends to think most British bands with hooks fall into the '77 category) with relevant, sharp songwriting. They play two originals and two covers: one of Divine and the other an intense update of The Tom Robinson Band's "Glad to Be Gay." The latter easily being the best track on the album, with lyrics updated to be (more) relevant to today, with the corporate co-opting of queer culture. The rest of their songs were short, to the point, and addictive. Destructors 666 have gruff sort of vocals, reminding me of Jimmy Pursey at times. They have a Seeds cover as well as two originals which were, you could say, more party-oriented than Eastfield. Good punk rock that is a nice throwback to old records you know and love, but exciting enough to keep you from turning it off to play those old records. –Craven Rock (Rowdy Farrago)

EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING: *Primary Colours:* CD
I hope I'm not being too obscure here, but this sounds like The Bass Holes merged with Lifter Puller. Sure, there's a comforting feeling you're in the hands of musicians who've been playing for decades, even if they haven't—circular, repeated, lyrics (so you can sing along to a song the second time you hear it), and strained almost-spoken, yet confident vocals. But if the listener zones out for just a bit, there are strong, hooky indie elements that cast the more garage elements in a unique light. It's like holding a bare bulb underneath something; instead of where light traditionally falls, attention is brought to an area usually cast in darkness. It's this little change of approach that makes this record fuckin' good. It's like those paintings where you have to have soft eyes to see the hidden picture (a schooner is a sailboat, stupidhead). I never thought I'd be hearing something akin to taking the wonderful elements of the Gibson Brothers in one ear and Superchunk in the other, and with a soft focus, hearing the two blend into something denatured from both. An outright surprise and a great one at that. (In engines, a suppression ring is a device in the crankcase that prohibits backfiring. The band name fits.) –Todd (Goner/Aarght!)

ELECTRIC BUNNIES, THE: *Eskimo:* 7"
Man, some things just have to be filed under enigma, like this Electric Bunnies seven inch here. I know, I know, gees oh gees, let's not start on the name. I'm going to focus on the positive and this three piece out of Miami, Florida thrash out two poppy garage-influenced gems that just flat out rock. I'm about to kick myself for being from Florida and not having heard them before. Then, I flip to the B-side and the bottom drops out. There's this muted-out electro dump-fest that sounds like new age chanting. It just makes me want to toss what seemed like a potentially nice surprise right into my "you're headed to the used record store" pile. I haven't heard enough of 'em to know which band they are, but I'm willing to seek out more releases in





order to solve this riddle. If it's the band on the A-side, hoorah! But if I hear one more song like the one on the B-side, I'm done. –Dave Disorder (Florida's Dying, floridasdying.com)

END OF ALL:
***The Art of Decadence:* CD**
Definite Wolfpack influence here (an ex-member is in this band). Heavy and mid tempo metallic hardcore with the stamp of Sweden all over it. Amid the darkness and heavy pummeling dealt by the rhythm section there are strong, tuneful currents flowing through the songs. The dual guitars, at times, play off each other, one pushing forward, the other creating a new layer with a melodic angle. The piano on "Sista Vilan" was a great touch, ending the album on a somber note. –M.Avrg (Crimes Against Humanity)

ESTRANGED, THE:
***"Entranced" b/w "Vilified":* 7"**
I know I'm repeating myself, but if The Estranged hadn't heard of Articles Of Faith prior to recording, I'll boil my shoes, eat them, and floss with the laces. The A-side track is the fastest and most to-the-point I've heard from them, giving the most evidence of their pedigree in previous hardcore bands. The B-side is, by a small degree, more rough and loose than what's on their excellent debut full-length, *Static Thoughts*. The Estranged walk a tightrope expertly; they retain their icy structures and foreboding qualities, while locking into a catchy, pocketed grooves. That balance separates them far above the glut of standard, more predictable fare. –Todd (DeadIdeas)

EVERYTHING MUST GO:
***Sonic Pornography:* CD**
I don't know if everything must go, but one thing that really needs to go is wishy-washy Dead Boys rehash bands. –Ty Stranglehold (Calendar Of Death)

FEAR OF LIPSTICK: *Indie Band:* CD-R EP
Never had heard of this band, but when they played the first night of Insubordination Fest 2008, I was convinced. Four tunes, all clever, all rocking. I bet these guys drink Molson Golden. An honest brew makes its own friends, and an honest band like Fear Of Lipstick does not disappoint. Looking to hear more from these guys soon. –Sean Koepenick (It's Alive)

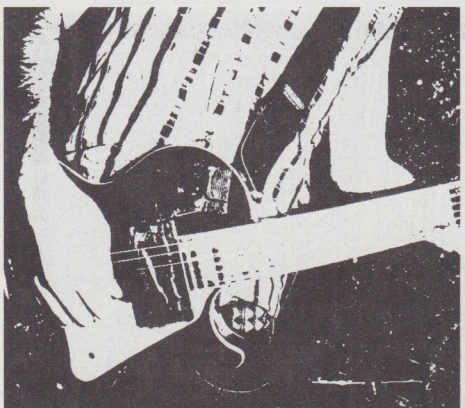
FIX MY HEAD: Self-titled: 7" EP
A nice bit of thrashin' put down here by these Oakland natives. The A side opens up with two slower, heavy tempoed tunes and from there they let loose with the thrash; not as fast as some, but more than intense enough to make it worth your while. –Jimmy Alvarado (Vinyl Addict)

GASLIGHT ANTHEM, THE:
***Señor and the Queen:* CDEP**
Here comes my poorest and undoubtedly least understandable simile for this issue, but I'm standing by it: the Gaslight Anthem sound like what I would imagine a genetic recombination of R.E.M. and the Bouncing Souls to sound like. This is one of those records on which even the music sounds like it's in a thoughtful and introspective mood. This would be a great record for driving around town while wistful and vaguely dissatisfied with things. Rocks well, but provokes inward musings at the same time. I like it a bit more every time I hear it. –The Lord Kveldulfr (Sabot Productions)

GENTLEMAN JESSE: Self-titled: CD
There's a lot to say for records that smolder all the way through. Hip sways. Deep nods, slight sneers, the feeling that you want to snap your fingers, even though you rarely think of such things. Gentleman Jesse isn't blathering, blistering, or putting the listener's face up to a belt sander. Nor is the trio powdering up diphenhydramine hydrochloride and blowing clouds of it to the audience. This is no snooze-fest. They take a route that's much more perilous, where each instrument has to take its turn being load bearing so the songs don't buckle from being constructed by fluff or effects pedals. And when it's an instrument's time to shine; bright tones, crisp lines, decipherable lyrics, and more than just a little bit of dazzle all the way through. It takes me back to bands like Eater and The Saints; bands that didn't quite fit into the "natural order of things" when they were around, but their audio legacies are undeniable. The impeccable pacing also heavily reminds me of The Exploding Hearts, but in more of a Merseybeat, instead of Elvis Costello-ish, way. I hate hearing this record end. Fantastic. –Todd (Douchemaster)

GET BENT: Demo 2008: CD-R
Okay, I totally concede that these guys are pretty danged good at the whole Leatherface via Hot Water Music thang. The songs are well-structured and catchy enough, they play with enough spirit so as not to sound like they're going through the motions, and the post-Dü noodly guitar bits would make Stubbs proud. Sometimes, however, it just comes down to personal preferences and this just ain't enough my ball of earwax to go completely gaga over it. –Jimmy Alvarado (Get Bent)

GHUNDI: *3196:* EP
At first I thought, "This isn't so bad. It sort of sounds like the Dead Milkmen," but then the second song came on and sounded like a pit bull fucking a screaming baby's face so I turned it off. Upon my next sitting of the CD, I was quite pleased to not hate it. Half the songs were good, half the songs were not so good. But it was good enough to push me towards further investigation of the band's album content. But because trying to read their lyrics is like looking at the clues and squares to a jigsaw puzzle—fuck it, DIY. So I looked up Ghundi online because I could have sworn "Drop the Dead Junkie" was a cover, but I guess it's not. Instead, I came across them on Youtube and was excited to see


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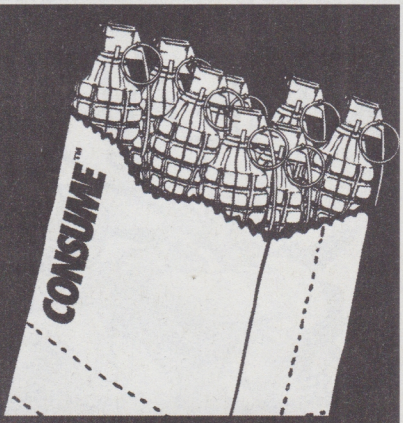
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that the four-piece is from Ireland, yet disappointed to discover they are not high school kids. –Gabe Rock (Fake Your Own Death)

GIRLS OF THE GRAVITRON: Self-titled: 7"
Three songs of shapeshifting lo-fi, acoustic-based indie pop from Tennessee. White noise and dubby sounds blanket the songs that sometimes sound too slow, sometimes too fast. Once you get past the general mindfuck, some of this is quite catchy, especially "When I'm Dead." Though not simpering and twee, this band would be at home on K Records in the '90s. Will someone please tell them that if they bring over the jug wine, I'll provide the two-miles-under-the-earth's-crust-molten-magma diggity dank nugs, and we can get hazy together? –CT Terry (Boom Chick)

GIRLS, THE: *Yes No Yes No Yes No:* CD
Call me old fashioned, but I miss Devo and I didn't mind *Max Headroom*. I understand Devo's still around, but given that their last studio record *Smooth Noodle Maps* (not so good) came out eighteen years ago, I think there's room in this world for some heavy-duty Devo worship on the ground level (as opposed to the Disney level, where Devo 2.0 was Devo-endorsed kids re-recording Devo songs). I've always liked the icy, more evil Devo, too. I mean, Devo pretty much strip mined and devoured any chance that future synthesizer and male-fronted electronics punks could follow in their Energy Domes without being compared to them… And with that said, The Girls more than carry their weight in *Yes No Yes No Yes No.* Your individual waves of remembrance and urges to reach for *Freedom of Choice* may vary. Not bad at all. Funny, the last time I saw The Girls, I don't even remember seeing a synthesizer. Maybe they got one of The Epoxies' ones at a yard sale. (Damn you for breaking up, Epoxies.) –Todd (Dirtnap)

GLASS AND ASHES: Self-titled: LP
I'm not sure what the final verdict was on this band staying together or splitting up, but if they do split, this is a damn fine high note to go out on. I guess I should give another listen to the first album because I remember it being, well, nothing special. There was nothing to grab on to for me at the time. This album is different. There's a fair amount of the chaos and noise that I remember from the first record but it's broken up by these pissed melodic moments that I do not remember them having before. I feel like I tend to drift out a little when I listen to this but just as the record is about to fade in to the background, it kicks you in the shins with these gruff vocaled jams that are a little more pissed than a lot of their contemporaries on ole No Idea but just as catchy. They're definitely a sight to see live as well. Hopefully I'll get a chance to do that again. Plus, Mike looks a lot like Judge Reinhold and that comforts me for some reason. –Stevo (No Idea)

GOLDBLADE: *Mutiny:* CD
Lyrically, this is a bit better with more pointed salvos at the power structure than I remember previous discs being, but ultimately their take on punk seems more driven by adhering to a template than really pushing forward from the starting gate, which leaves their efforts sounding a bit hollow and thin on righteous anger about what they're going on about. Gotta say, though, I've gone from dismissal with extreme prejudice to a grudging respect for 'em, which means either I'm slowly softening through repeated exposure, or they're getting a wee bit better with each release. –Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

GROSS URGE: *Cat Killer:* Cassette
Plodding basslines and doddering drumbeats—possibly played simultaneously by the same guy—while what sounds like an eleven-year-old kid yelps inanities over the top of it. Does contain the immortal line, "I don't like to skate 'cause it hurts when I fall." Limited to fifty. –Keith Rosson (Baby Carrots)

HAMMERLOCK: *Barefoot & Pregnant:* CD
This enhanced re-release of the now classic 2000 album by San Francisco Confederacy of Scum band Hammerlock includes three bonus tracks and a hilarious music video. The Bay Area may seem like an unlikely place for this un-PC, country punk band to emerge from, but Hammerlock has stood the test of time and this album is even better than I'd remembered. *Barefoot & Pregnant* brings back memories of when C.O.S. bands like Hellstomper, Cocknoose, and Limecell were churning out release after release in rapid-fire succession. Of all of the C.O.S. bands, none embraced hick humor more than Hammerlock. You can almost smell mud and manure from the CD player as this motherfucker spins. –Art Ettinger (Steel Cage)

HANNA HIRSCH / YOUNG FIT MALES: Split 7" EP
Young Fit Males: Oh, Sweden, land of fancy packaging and a currency that is whipping the American dollar into peso-like proportions. As America's empire quickly returns to the dust of broken promises on the fault lines of colonialism-style hubris, Sweden's been busy backing their cultural arts and thus come the dividends. There's some connection between Young Fit Males, Fy Fan, and Svartenbrandt, but I'm not sure what it is. What I do know is that these folks play spot-on melodic hardcore. Not the assy stuff; muscular music that could be reinterpreted as either folk or power pop in other hands; just nice, meaty charges-ahead with Wipers-like guitar. Hanna Hirsch: If the band goes on the life cycle of The Vicious, right when I get my level of enthusiasm to reach "apeshit," they'll probably break up…. Dunno if they have, but their two songs commandeer the bouncy ball goodness of Knugen Faller: one foot in good 1977, one cable plugged into the not-too-distant future; connecting the

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icy space of early Wire to the on-the-spotness of Gorilla Angreb through the switchboard of "man, this is good. I'm sure it's going to be a sonofabitch to find." –Todd (Self-released)

HEAD ON COLLISION: *Ritual Sacrifice:* CD
Speed metal owing much from predecessors like Sodom, Kreator and, yes, Slayer. If that sounds appealing, you could easily do much worse than this. –Jimmy Alvarado (Beer City)

HEATHERS, THE: Lose It: Demo CDEP
I can't tell if The Heathers are quickly on their way to becoming something totally awesome, like The Carrie Nations, or something that started out fucking great then ended in a big shrug, like Kosher, or something like Hot Carl that took a long fucking time to develop and exceeded all expectations, years later as The Chinese Telephones. Because The Heathers have that effortless, elastic quality that stretches through three decades of rock'n'roll, DIY punk, early English punk, and are able to kaleidoscope through snatches of the Wipers, Apocalypse Hoboken, The Embarrassment, and weird '80s guitar flashes, like the catchiest of The Church. Here's to hoping they chose the right paths in the long run. A complete surprise. Stoked. –Todd (Self-released)

HELLHOLE: *Uppers / Downers:* 7"
My apologies gents, but you drew the short stick with me here. I'll admit that this is competently played and for those more into the style than I, this might be passable. Fans of by-the-numbers monkey beat hardcore with a capital HARD (think '80s, New York and pissed) will be pleased with the a-side. Dudes into the extended dirges will be stoked with the b-side. I will say that I like that this is on Don Giovanni because I would not have expected this from them after some of the other records they've put out. –Stevo (Don Giovanni)

HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE: *Mondo Blotto:* LP
This new release is still spastic and all over the place, yet Henry Fiat's Open Sore seem to have developed their weirdness to a degree that can only be measured in comparison to bands like Devo or Turbonegro. At times, this record definitely reminds me of both bands, and only until I realized that did I even consider how hard of a thing that must be to pull off. From the second track, "The Knuckledraggin Neanderthal in Me," which has a Loverboy being covered by Devo, being covered by HFOS feel to it. All the way to the ending spoken word part of the last track "Mondo Blotto," which cannot play without escaping *Apocalypse Dudes* comparisons, does this album dance around, throwing drunken slugs and bear hugs of European sensibility dosed with party-hard strength and a look no ways before you cross the road rock'n'roll vengeance. –Daryl (Alien Snatch)

HOMOSTUPIDS: *Cat Music:* 7"
I can't get enough of bands that somehow rip total noise and amp destruction—yet creep a song inside it. The Homostupids can keep it simple but interesting, punishing with a catch. They are basically hardcore with the screaming and pushing the feedback thunder, but I've never been bored with their songs. You'd think they were half-assed with the scribbled covers (look across the 45s, their name is always slapped on by hand but not copied and pasted) but it's just something to hold the music in. With two of the three songs close to two minutes each, this is epic, even with a moment of a horn section playing one of their older tracks, "Sixths." They always add in weird shit that makes sense to them. Get it now. –Speedway Randy (Fashionable Idiots)

HOSTAGES: *Legend in My Head, Failure to the World:* 7"
The early 2000s saw some interesting trends emerge within the hardcore scene. Bands like Panic and American Nightmare made it fashionable to do away with typical hardcore sloganeering in favor of Morrissey and Ian Curtis-inspired personal gut spilling. This eventually led to the birth of the Makeoutclub online community where the ever-saddening avatars of sensitive hardcore kids worldwide could be found alongside their favorite bum-out quotes and song lyrics. Some anthropological experts (well, me) insist that it was this community of sad sacks that eventually led to the tight-panted, swept-black-hair, Hanoi Rocks version of "hardcore" that thrives today in whichever online –Space or –Book is currently driving the kids wild. To whoever's interested, Hostages are keeping that flame alive, pretty much verbatim. –Dave Williams (Burnbridges)

HULK OUT / ALL THOSE OPPOSED / THIRD DEATH: Split: LP
One-sided three-way split with an etching on the b-side. All the bands fall pretty firmly under the flipped-bill-and-skateboards thrash umbrella; and after repeated listens, there just wasn't much to separate these boys from the umpteen million other bands doing this stuff. –Keith Rosson (Tor Johnson)

HUNCHBACK: *Pray for Scars:* LP
I wasn't immediately taken in by this very noisy NJ band when I first heard them via a two-song 7", but this full-length has my interested piqued. The songs vary stylistically, but are ultra noisy and complex. There's a folk punk undercurrent to counterbalance the experimental noise, but this is still on the less accessible side of punk. The dual female and male vocals are pretty on some of the tracks, and downright eerie on others. Judging by the entertaining interview they did with Joe Evans III in *Razorcake* #42, Hunchback definitely has a sense of humor about how fucking absurd they are. Despite being a vinyl snob, I don't have a turntable in my car like Elvis did. So I appreciate the

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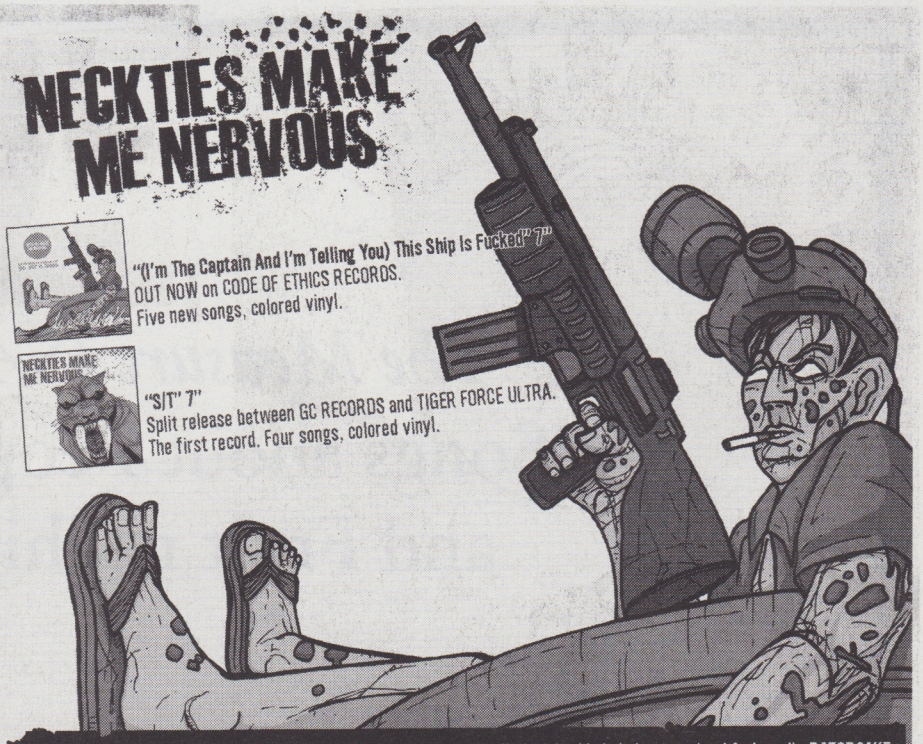
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fact that this LP follows the much appreciated trend of LPs coming with full CD versions as well. I still don't "get" Hunchback, but I think that's part of the point. It's rough being a punk simpleton sometimes. –Art Ettinger (Don Giovanni)

HYSTERICS / NO PLACE FOR A HERO: *Lessons in Sharing:* 7"
Hysterics: Ummm... screaming and a whole lot of "ahhhhhhhhhs"? NPFAH: Fucking awful. I used to think anyone (read: an-y-one, as in, every single person who has every been in a bar, probably wasted, when Journey comes on) could pull off Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'," but these guys even manage to ruin that. And, one of the singers even has moments that sound like the original singer of The Because (one of the best bands out of Japan) and it still can't work with even that. Blech. –Megan (Flammable)

IMPERIAL LEATHER: *Do You Know Where Your Children Are?:* CD
I was excited to see a follow-up to this band's excellent debut LP *Something Out of Nothing*. That record was a favorite and saw a lot of playtime at the home and in the car. I was also very fortunate to see them live when they came through on tour in the states a couple of years ago. Live and on record, they are an enjoyable experience. Think late '70s to early 80s American punk rock sound mixed with U.K. '82 that stresses the rock edge and still maintains a modern edge. This Swedish wonder team's members played in many former and current bands. If you are curious, it a good assignment for you to do some research and see if they have played in a band you recognize. On this sophomore effort, the band goes for more of a raw and live-sounding production to record their brand of straight up, no bullshit punk. The melody is still there but there is no sugar coating the angry sound. What I really like this time around is that the guitars have a raunchier sound. It gives the new songs a sassiness and two fingers in the air attitude to them. I am really glad that this wasn't a stinker because it sucks to be disappointed. –Donofthedead (Profane Existence)

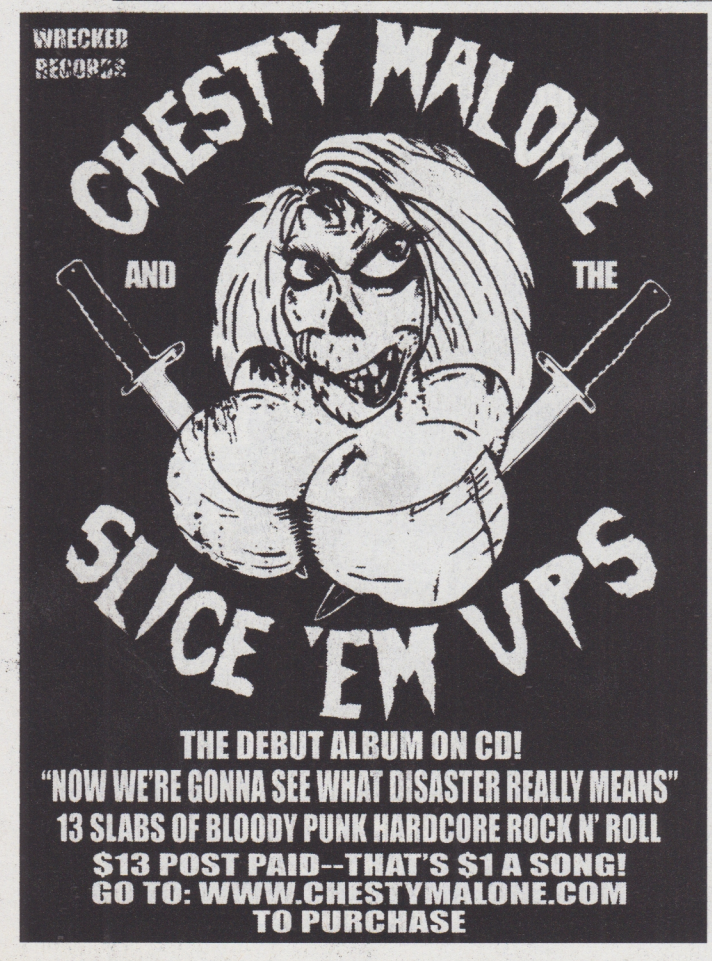
INSTÄNGD: *Konkret Och Brutal EP:* 7"
Definitely more accessible than last year's release on Sorry State Records, Instängd is still bringing the raw, noisy hardcore Swedish punk without fail. Sure, if you don't know Swedish, you might not know what they're hollering about. But I'm pretty positive they're pissed off about that same things that make everyone plug in and make a whole lot of racket. –Daryl (Adult Crash)

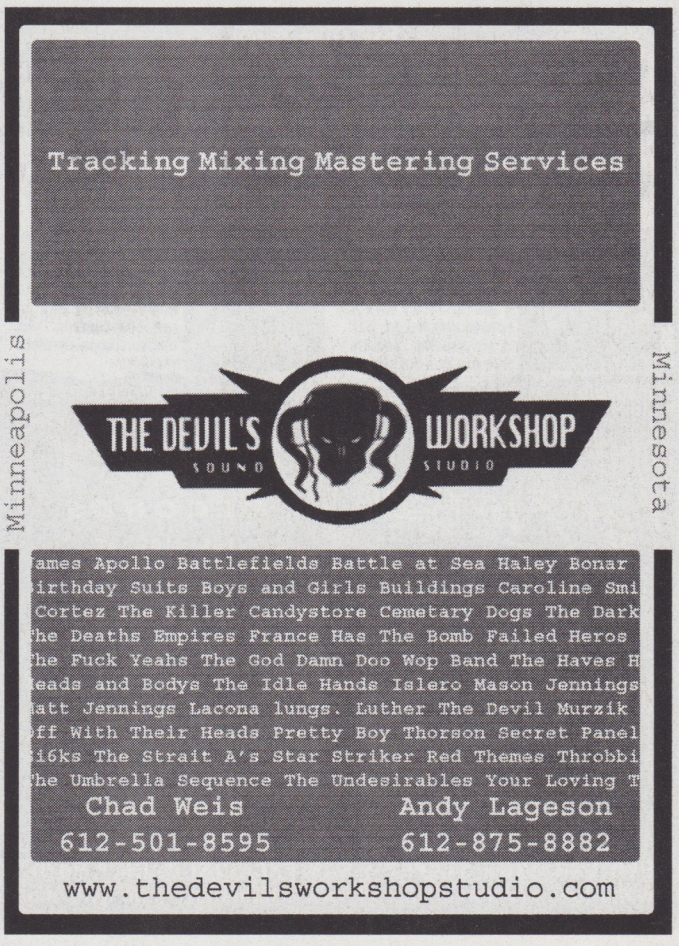
JACUZZI BOYS: *Ghost Ghost:* 7"
With the recent psych-garage boom (read: Black Lips) I would expect this band to be at the top of everyone's lists. Great songs, ghostly vocals, plucky surf guitar, simple beats, wandering and moody but with solid riffs that should make any dot-covered girl and beanpole guy weep over. I haven't revisited much psych stuff, but this is easy to keep replaying. "Age of the Giant Jellyfish" is a must, if you tend to wake up after dark. –Speedway Randy (Florida's Dying)

JAMMY DODGERS, THE: *Skive Off:* CD
Okay, so it's not on Plan-It-X, but the nod is so obvious that it may as well be—features Chris from Op: Cliff Clavin and Plan-It-X and the woman that I *believe* is in Punkin Pie. So you've got a good idea of what you're getting here: topical but damn close to preachy and often cloyingly positive lyrics delivered above frayed and frantic punk. Like Clavin's other bands, I find that while the sincerity is heartfelt, it's also just a hair shy of being totally over-the-top corny. The fact that the female vocalist sounds like a cartoon character and that each person in the band lists their "likes" (the drummer likes tea, painting, games, secrets, and dancing) doesn't do much to alleviate that. Also contains *Transmissions* #2, nineteen spoken word tracks done audio zine-style, in which Dakota Floyd loses for complaining about how no one in his scene supports his lofty punk endeavors, and Boogdish wins for performing a play written by second graders—complete with British unicorns, robots with broken flamethrowers, and ice cream parties—that's absolutely fucking hilarious. –Keith Rosson (Rock-It)

JASON WEBLEY: *The Cost of Living:* CD
I was listening to this in the car, analyzing it, wracking my brain to come up with a review as I wait for my wife to get out of work. I'm thinking it sounds like a low rent Tom Waits in a Leonard Cohen-type way, but nah, that's not quite it. Next I'm thinking the use of dynamics and rhythm.... No, no, no, that ain't it, either. My wife gets in the car, and says, "What is this cheesy music you're listening to? It sounds like the love theme from *Rocky*," and in two seconds and sixteen words, she cuts through all the pretense I'd been trying to lay down and hits the nail right on the head. –Jimmy Alvarado (11)

JAY REATARD: *Singles 06-07:* CD/DVD
In The Red's great comp of Jay's solo singles—recording after he started playing under just his own name, recording all instruments himself (except for one Alix Brown solo). He first beat a guitar and some pails into a broken 4-track at age fifteen and has now come full circle. Reatards and Lost Sounds fans are split on his solo stuff, which is a lot more mild at times, even acoustic. I love all his stuff. The bands are different from each other—if I want to hear the fuzzzzzz, I can still put a Reatards album on. If you see him live today, the fury is still there. The singles are less furious and more nasal than his *Blood Visions* album, but are as good. Most of this feels like it could have been for his Wire-style band Angry Angles had they not broke up. As kind as the pop punk parts are, they are still spirited





by the fifteen-year-old in his room singing about being a fashion victim. "All Over Again" starts out plucky and sweet but gets dark. "I Know a Place" has some moody piano and wooooooo-oooo alongside the powering guitars and drums, but then it gets dark too. "I guess we both got what we asked for…" Each project is different but you can never separate Jay from his music. He is not getting stale in one spot nor turning to a boring imitation of himself. Keeps rock and roll fucking interesting. The DVD is three live performances and an interview that's short and okay. The performances don't catch any bloodletting or fights, but the music is incredible; much more hyper and loud than the recordings. Only downer is a lot of songs are repeated over the three. Still, this is a must. –Speedway Randy (In The Red)

JEAN MILLS SOCIETY TORCH: *Start Tomorrow:* EP
Straight-forward thrash in the vein of bands like Tear It Up and Life's Halt. Fast and faster is what you get. Good stuff from start to end. Not much else to say but turn it up and kick some shit in the room over. –M.Avrg (Firestarter)

JEFF THE BROTHERHOOD: *The Boys R Back in Town:* LP
Jeff The Brotherhood aren't easily categorized, which is certainly a good thing. I guess you could say they're a jam band, since the songs have a feel. They'll hit on a riff and the song takes off. But there's also a lot of searching in between than can be tedious. Fear not, this is not some gland stroke prog stuff. Irreverent for sure. They tip towards psychedelia on the first couple tracks. The rest of the songs are a mixed bag with varying results. The instrumental keyboard-driven song is pretty good. Other than that, it's a crap shoot. –M.Avrg (Infinity Cat)

JOHN WALSH: Self-titled: CD-R EP
I swear Nick from Razorcake did not put me up to this, but two Jon Weiner reviews in one issue? Ridiculous! More straight ahead hardcore; think "TV Party" on happy pills. Apparently John Walsh is high on life, and so are these dudes. Every song ends with an exclamation point, so you know they really mean it. Really! When you see them live, make sure you get the art of the high-five down or they will laugh at you. –Sean Koepenick (No label)

JOHNNY BODACIOUS & THE BAD ATTITUDES: *From Here to Outer Space:* CD
I really had no idea what to expect upon seeing this for the first time, but upon listening it kind of made me think of what it would sound like if Delay were more into metal than Green Day, in that it's fairly youthful and energetic sounding, with a touch more technical(-ish) parts in the songs. (I actually would've said "later-era Propaghandi" instead of metal, but the songs don't strike me as being political, at least not to any "The public transit systems are a racist bullshit institution" levels [yeah, that's about as best I can do there.]) It plays a little weird since it's apparently a collection of some old stuff and new stuff, but it's not bad, and I'd be interested in hearing more down the line. –Joe Evans III (Cassette Deck)

JR. JUGGERNAUT: *Ghost Poison:* CD
Alt.country with a definite rock core. There's more guitar noodling and distortion than you'd hear on your average alt.country CD, with the solo on "Early Morning Blackout" almost delving into metal territory. Pretty straightforward stuff, for the most part. –Sarah (Suburban Home)

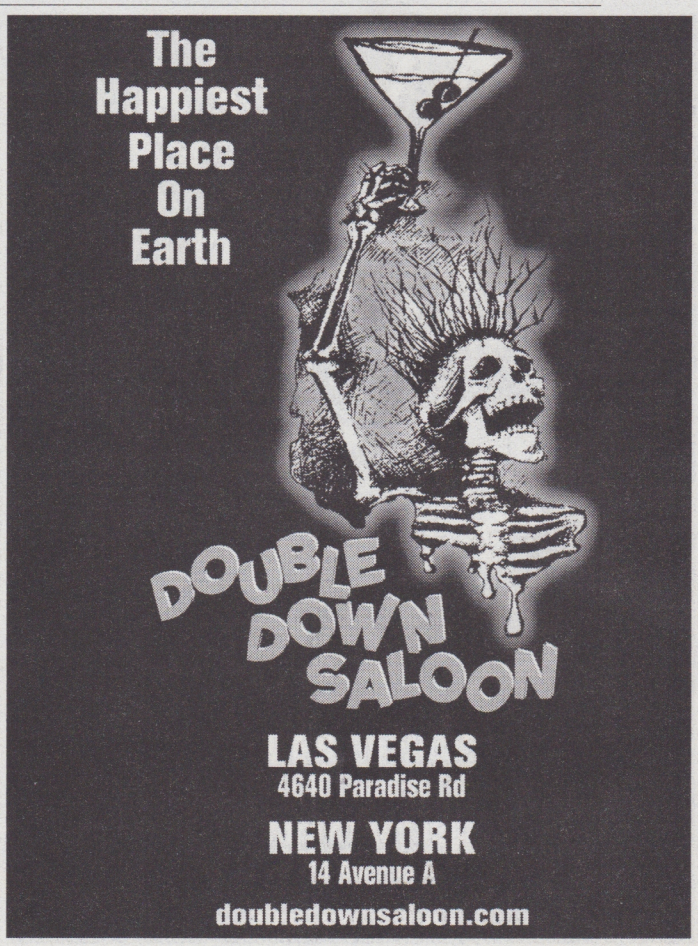
JUANITA Y LOS FEOS: Self-titled: CD
This is a really fun band from Madrid, Spain. The lyrics are in Spanish so not everyone can sing along, but you'll definitely be dancing to the beat. The strong bass lines and fluid use of keyboards really make this album jump. It's so good that these twelve tracks leave me thirsting for more, more, more! They take surf punk and make it their own by the dosage of great snotty grrrl vocals and then spitting the mix right in your face. If Bikini Kill met the Creepy Creeps in a dark alley to record the soundtrack for an El Santo fight scene, it would sound like this. –Rene Navarro (Dead Beat)

KAKISTOCRACY / NUX VOMICA: Split 7"
Two of the best names in state-side melodic crust come together for one epic battle of a split 7". I'd like to think that this 7" was so crushing on both sides that there could be no survivors because in typical crust fashion everyone would be annihilated, but I'm going to have to go with Nux Vomica as the victors. Both bands definitely put their all into it, but the charging tempo changes and fierce back up vocals throughout their side of the 7" assured them a small, yet influential, lead to triumph. –Daryl (Humdinger/To Live A Lie)

KILL THE FALL: *The Waiting Process:* CD
A former Allergic To Whores dude takes the hardcore template in which he so blissfully basked in while in that aforementioned band and tosses in a heaping helping of stoner rock (which is essentially Sabbath-inspired metal smooshed with hardcore anyway, right?) to add a little heft to his already heavy endeavors. The songs are just what you'd expect: heavy, sludgy, and surprisingly catchy. Yeah, I'm diggin' this. –Jimmy Alvarado (Tragic End)

LET'S DANCE: *Summer Breeze: 7"* EP
The packaging is flabbergastingly exorbitant. Poker chip-thick, clear vinyl with red and blue translucent blobs inside. 3D cover art. 3D, glossy record sleeve, poster, and record labels, folded-up, looks-like-a-newspaper insert, a pair of monogrammed 3D glasses, and a sticker. Fuckin' hell. How do you not lose money on this if you charge less than ten dollars? The music, unfortunately, doesn't live up the packaging. It's standard pub rock / street punk—half-hearted chants, an





ehh snotty snarl, predictable guitars, and a basic drummer. The singer adopts an English accent when they cover the Sex Pistols' "Bodies." Gimme Beltones. Gimme Wednesday Night Heroes. Gimme the first couple of U.S. Bombs records. Gimme the Bodies. Gimme GC5. Let's Dance just lacks any sort of spark for them to live up to the bands on their T-shirts. Sorry. –Todd (Longshot)

LIVING WRECKS, THE: *Cheap Heat*: CD
Gang vocals are like writing a novel and italicizing all the text you think is clever and insightful. Anyway, the music reminded me of nothing, which can sometimes mean they were so original I have nothing to compare them to, but, in actuality, means they were so generic I couldn't narrow it down. –Bryan Static (Zodiac Killer)

LOSER X: *Underground Idiots*: 7"
I feel like I'm blaspheming in church—kicking out an oops-poop in a pew or something—but I've got to be honest and say it sounds like Snuffy Smiles broke their winning streak with this one. While the label is renowned for putting out some of the best heart-on-your-sleeve raggedy-edge pop punk on the planet, they've chosen a fairly dull hardcore band to do a record with here. Eight songs, heavy references to Minor Threat—lyrically and otherwise. One of those records where all the pieces *should* fit together to form a juggernaut, but something got lost along the way. The atonal vocals and terrible cover art don't help. Damn. –Keith Rosson (Snuffy Smiles)

MAC BLACKOUT: Self-titled: CD
A collection of demos by one of the brains behind the Functional Blackouts and Daily Void. Basically, what you're getting here is a man and his synthesizer making much noise, the value of which depends on how you feel about a man and his synthesizer making much noise. This'll no doubt be indispensable for fans of either band, but I'm guessing the unwashed masses would probably be no worse for wear if they never heard it. –Jimmy Alvarado (Deadbeat)

MACC LADS, THE: *Live at Leeds (The Who?)/From Beer to Eternity*: CD
So I have a bit of a soft spot for mind numbingly juvenile punk rock. I guess it goes without saying that I like The Macc Lads. Fun and stupid, yet rocking. This is a reissue of two LPs, the first of which is the live record. Never been a huge fan of live records, but this one sounds good and the banter is hilarious. The second disc is the *From Beer to Eternity* record, which has some good stuff on it, but never measured up to the likes of *Beer & Sex & Chips n Gravy*. It looks like Cherry Red is reissuing all of their stuff in a double disc, two LP format. Worth grabbing unless you're overly sensitive. –Ty Stranglehold (Cherry Red)

MACC LADS, THE: *The Beer Necessities/Alehouse Rock*: CD
A two-fer CD set of this band's last two albums, both of which are chock full of songs celebrating the joys of blowjobs, beer, sex, premature ejaculation, and all sortsa other topics that make for interesting dinner conversation. These guys have never really quite been my can o' worms, but if you love 'em, you need this. –Jimmy Alvarado (Cherry Red)

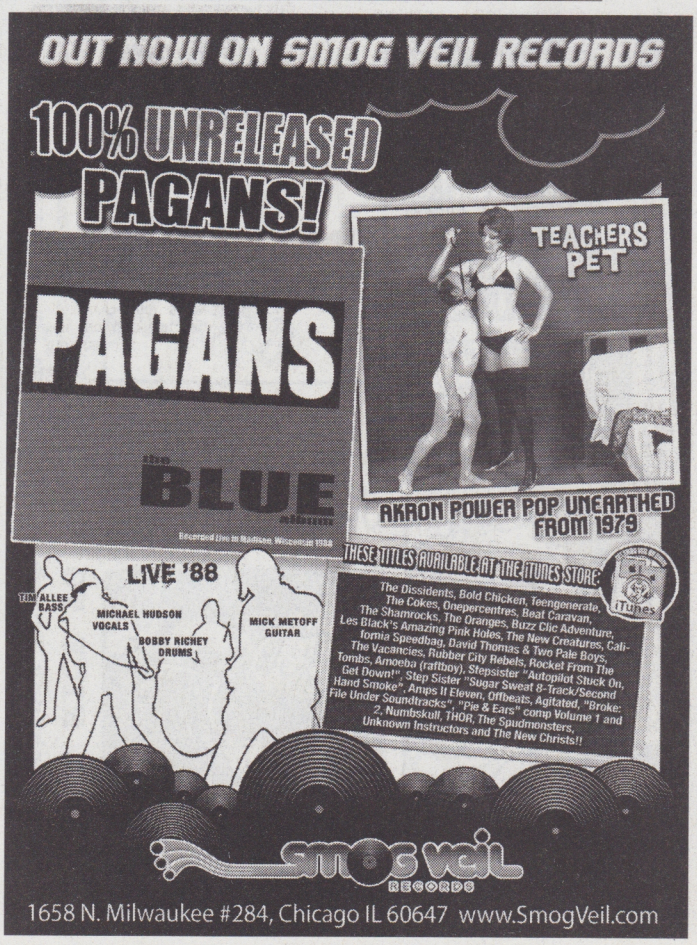
MACC LADS, THE: *Two Original LPs*: CD
Double disc set of this Peter And The Test Tube Babies-style punk rock band who sings about beer, sex, and food. Oi lovers rejoice. –Mr. Z (Anagram)

MAKEOUT PARTY, THEE: *Play Pretend*: CD
I mean this in the literal sense. These dudes look one hundred percent gay for each other. And man-on-man time is fine by me. Run it up a pole, have the train chug through a mountain tunnel. I don't care. It's just that the packaging—which I'm assuming is an elaborate inside joke—betrays what's inside. (They're holding hands in a human chain on a mountain; then they're all stuffed inside a tea cup ride at Disneyland, cuddled up and laughing.) The music is what the Beach Boys would have sounded like if they started up in the 2000s and their debut was *Pet Sounds*… and I don't mention that lightly. There are true bits of genius in this record; they're not afraid to steer into strange pop areas and come out smelling good. They nail the yellow sunshine-on-top / weird, cracked, pus-green corrupt underbelly of Anaheim (and suburbias in general) effortlessly. (Also for fans of early Redd Kross and the lighter side of The Muffs.) The music's pretty great… but the packaging… oh, the packaging. –Todd (Teenacide / Recess)

MARVELOUS DARLINGS: *The Swords, The Streets*: 7"
In certain ways this reminds me of D Generation. Modern and arguably not-douchey takes on late '70s Thunders, a touch of glam but with the speed and sensibility of punk to keep it short. This is the second 7" of theirs that I've heard, and I'm not really sold. I mean, the songs are okay, but they're nothing to howl about. I believe that someone involved with Fucked Up is in this band and it leads me to believe that that is the reason this band has more legs than it probably should with the output that I've heard. I'll reserve final judgment until I see them live. Maybe that sells it. –Stevo (Wallride)

MARVELOUS DARLINGS: *The Swords, The Streets*: 7"EP
It always takes me a little by surprise when a band can pull off grit-laden glam rock without the joke being on them. I'm always on the lookout for stuff that's sick with hooks, is rock'n'roll, and is cocky, but it isn't driven by a transparent cockholeishness. The





Marvelous Darlings channel some Sweet and some Slade through fellow Canadians, The Black Halos, filter (if you ever come across *The Violent Years*, I suggest giving it a listen), into a couple of high-strutting platform boots, assless chaps and suspenders (in sound; there's not photo of the band in the 7") what-the-fuck-you-looking-at, I'll-kill-you-in-mid-solo songs. Nice. –Todd (Wallride)

McKENZIE-BRUCE: *Berner Street:* CD
This is the greatest prog metal Jack the Ripper concept album in history. True, it's the only entry in that genre. (Spinal Tap's Derek Smalls spoke of *Saucy Jack* but never made it). And, true, it's an awful album—really, one of the worst the cut-out bins have ever coughed up—but neither of these factors should diminish *Berner Street*'s place in history. The storyline is foggy, at best, the arrangements are like a train jumping tracks, and the solos, dear god, the solos, they're everywhere. Guitarist Tony McKenzie is all over his fretboard—the opening song has three distinct solos, fifty seconds each—but I don't think he has any control over when he solos. They're more like seizures. And there's more. Perhaps up to $10,000. *Berner Street* is also a contest. Solve the band's mystery and you could win a lot of money. I've listened to this *Plan 9 From Outer Space*-like fiasco a bunch of times and I have yet to figure out what the central question is, never mind solving said question, but like the aforementioned Ed Wood flick, I come back for more, fascinated by the litany of misguided thinking. I doubt I'll ever solve the mystery, so here's the "official entry number" that came with my copy: POFO4C624712C. Good luck. –Mike Faloon (Big Dan)

ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES: *Have another Ball:* CD
The Gimmes have been around for eleven years? Really? An "unearthed A-sides album"? Unbelievable. It's hard to spooge over a covers record by a punk super group band—there's no cache in that. There are wars to consider and Presidents to loathe and inflation and recession; serious business. But fuck me if I haven't listened to the Gimmes consistently over the last decade. There are four reasons for it. 1.) Spike can sing. The dude's got a set of pipes. 2.) Drums and guitars mixed high into songs that didn't have much of them the first go around always makes me smile. 3.) Reclamation time. You won't find me popping on any John Denver or the *Hair* soundtrack any time soon, but I'll sing along to the Gimmes' "Country Roads" and "Sodomy" without reservation or irony. 4.) Gateway music. Throwing a "mixed" (read: not-exclusively-punk) party? The Gimmes fit the bill. People already know most of the words and the compositions, and that gets rumps shaking. Rumor is that some of the Gimmes' versions of these songs are played in Japanese airports. Diplomacy is comfort, my friends, and that's why I endorse the decade-plus joke of the Gimmes to this day. –Todd (Fat)

MEHKAGO N.T.:
***Human Extinction EP:* 7"**
I recently played the B-side of this record at a show in between bands and I think people's reaction is a pretty good summation of the music that is contained in these grooves. Let's just say there was a lot of slow, repetitive head movement and fist clenching. This band is heavy and hardcore and punk rock. If this isn't the best band in Miami, I would love to hear what is. –Daryl (S.O.Y./Vinyl Rites/Abort The World)

MEHKAGO N.T.: Self-titled: 12" EP
A band with a logo written in black letter is usually a good sign you're in for something heavy. That certainly applies here. Mehkago N.T. crank out some filthy and dark hardcore. The guitar has a thick buzzing sound, but the bass, oh man! Great sound! Sounds like the strings are loose with that rattley and vibrating sound. The style is mid paced but they throw in some tempo changes here and there to pick things up when called for. "Programmed but Innocent" is the standout track. The longer duration allows for the tension to build and resolve at the end. Nice sample at the end there! –M.Avrg (Makeshift Origami / S.O.Y. / Vinyl Rites)

MOB 47: *Dom Luger Igen:* CDEP
Holy fuggin' christ! After a good hundred years of being away, Mob 47 return to the fray sounding as fresh and lethal as they did when they first came onto the scene sometime in the early eighties (first recording in 1983, EP in 1984, etc., etc.). Eight ragers that hit hard as all hell, and then some, with a dirty edge and rumbling low end. Equally fast, catchy, and memorable. All the way through. A solid listen that demands repeated listening with the volume on eleven. –M.Avrg (Communichaos Media)

MOMENT, THE:
***We Are the Plague:* CD**
Seems like after the first half of their second album The Moment woke up from a nap and started to make it fucking happen. In fact, "Hello Tiny One, You Are the Future" is a good song; track five to be exact. But it was too little too late for me—keyboards and screaming done in that way that seemed to be really popular, or it was five years ago. Definitely influences from Cursive and other bands that sound like that. Fuck! Sorry, guys. I tried. This is my third time listening to the album and I still hate it. But I will say, for a two piece they force a lot of power into their music. The art of the CD is interesting. And the vocals have me curious about who sings what, so they probably have a good live show. But how the fuck would I know? I'm listening to a CD. –Gabe Rock (Cesspool Projects)





MONGREL:
***Fear, Lies, & Propaganda:* CD**
It's 4/4 hardcore punk with a non-ironic cheese metal flourish. It reminds me of when some of those U.K.-'82-type bands like The Exploited or GBH started sneaking more and more cock rock into their sound as the '80s progressed. I just fired up my time machine and went back to the mid-'90s to ask high school me what he thought, and he said he'd ask his mom to sew a Mongrel patch onto his hoodie if and only if they played an all ages show in town for no more than five bucks, and they found a label that didn't make them put explicit lyrics warning stickers on their albums like a bunch of herbs. –CT Terry (Locomotive)

MONROES, THE: *Drillin' Daylight:* 7" EP
As soon as I dropped the needle on this EP I felt like I was back in my college radio station's library, frantically pouring through the stacks during my two-to-four overnight shift searching for bands that sounded like fIREHOSE, Uncle Tupelo, Hüsker Dü, Moving Targets, even Soul Asylum (before they rocketed downhill). Guess you could say the Monroes induced a flannel rock flashback. They would have fit in perfectly with those bands—fast and punchy, but melodic and twangy sometimes, too. A really good EP. –Mike Faloon (Speed! Nebraska)

MOTHERFUCKERS, THE: *I Wanna Be a Cop... So I Can Fuck You up!!:* 7"
Here is a new slab of no-holds-barred punk rock out of Calgary. These guys come fast and angry and really make me want to smash things. I can't tell what is more disturbing: the cover drawing of the singer getting a cavity search by a cop or the B-side label drawing of said soiled rubber glove! The six tracks on this seven inch make a good soundtrack to any riot or skate session. –Ty Stranglehold (Handsome Dan)

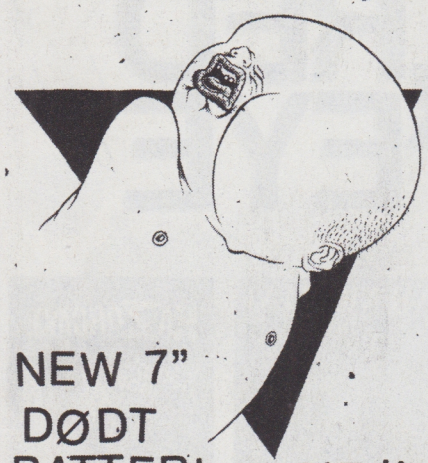
MOTORAMA:
***Psychotronic Is the Beat!:* CD**
Two Italian girls demonstrate they can easily smash, bash, and trash with the best of 'em. Although the order of the day is loud 'n' raunchy, there's enough diversity here to keep you on yer toes. –Jimmy Alvarado (Deadbeat)

MRNB: *Polish This:* CD
I guess this would be considered "old school" influenced punk/hardcore, but for some reason it just don't click for me. The songs seem a wee bit too loose to really ratchet up the necessary tension. –Jimmy Alvarado (Last Chance)

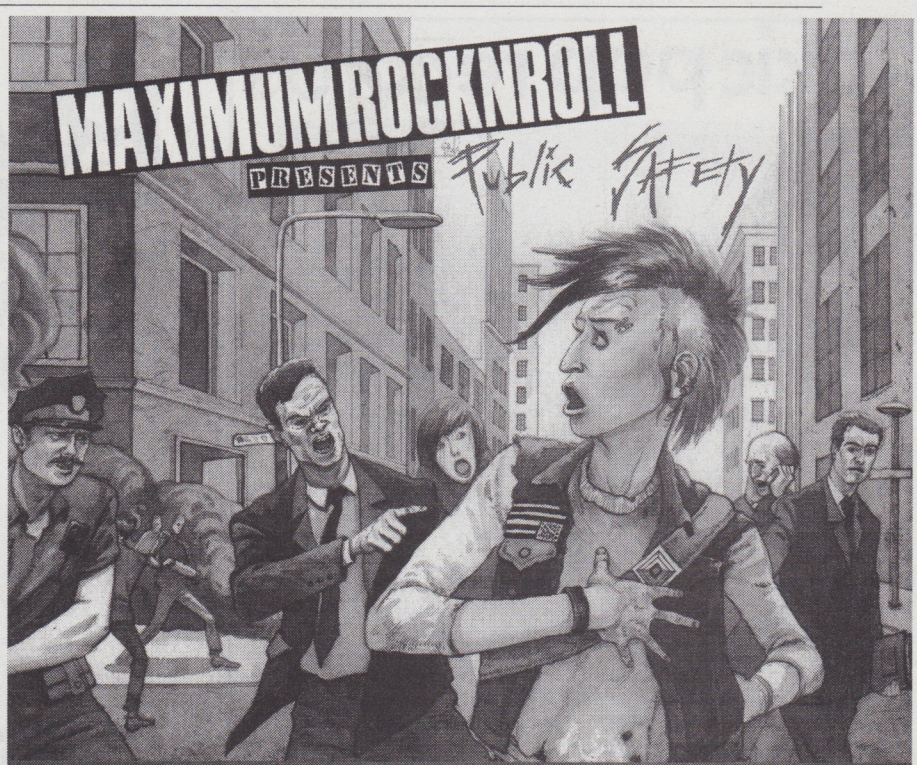
NAKED RAYGUN:
***Basement Screams:* LP**
NAKED RAYGUN: *Throb Throb:* LP
Naked Raygun is one of those bands that anyone who claims to have even a fleeting appreciation for music, let alone punk, should be well versed with. Their recorded output is consistently good and, on a few occasions, they managed to pen some truly breathtaking songs. Don't believe me? Give a listen to "Treason" and tell me you don't find yourself reaching to crank the volume to maximum two seconds into its Morse code/alarm intro. Unfortunately for you, that song ain't among those here, but take heart, 'cause there are still quite a few gems to be found here. *Basement Screams*, the band's debut, is the more experimental of the two, which makes sense, considering two of the members also did time in Big Black. Tempering the artiness, however, are heavy dollops of the U.K. punk and the U.S. hardcore that also served well their fellow Chicagoans The Effigies, resulting in a marriage of throbbing bass lines and static-pattern guitars to catchy pop hooks, and "whoa-oh" singalong bits. In addition to the six songs on the original EP, you get here five additional demo tracks from 1982-83, some of which differ from those on the 1999 CD reissue. By the time they got to recording *Throb Throb*, the band's primary songwriter, Santiago Durango, had left the band to devote his time to Big Black, leaving the rest of the members to come up with the tunes, which they did with amazing results. Starting of with the straightforward hardcore of "Rat Patrol," they strip-mine and expand on all the ideas they'd touched upon on *Basement Screams*, delving into chanty punk with odd lyrics ("Metastasis," which they also contributed to the second *Flipside Vinyl Fanzine* compilation); jazz-steeped tunes with odder lyrics ("Got all hepped up on too much speed/and danced 'til my prostate fell out...."); abrasive sludge ("Roller Queen," "No Sex"); social commentary ("I Don't Know," "Only in America," the latter featuring saxophone); and a bit more hardcore ("Stupid"). Although it's infinitely cool to have the band's first two records out on actual vinyl again, the real treat is that are quite a few albums that followed these, each one rife with great tunes, making for a legacy they will hopefully expand upon now that they're supposedly back together. If you're new to Naked Raygun, this is as good a place as any to start and if you're an old fan, this'll remind you why you loved 'em in the first place. Either way, these two discs are must-haves, no matter how you slice it. –Jimmy Alvarado (Haunted Town)

NASTY INTENTIONS:
***Straight Outta Tompkins:* Cassette**
Harkens back to the days of Mutant Pop, scouring the discount bins looking for 7"s by bands I'd at least heard of and a time when those wacky things called cassette tapes were the preferred format for putting something out quickly and cheaply. Not that Nasty Intentions sounds like a Mutant Pop band by any stretch, just that they're using a template that that label kind of ran into the ground years back—punk with melodic leanings. Not hammer-heavy Epitaph bro-rock or beards-and-gravel Hot Water Music melody-clones either; the singer can sing and hit notes decently, so he does. That's it. The lyrics are still smart, the energy's still high, the music's still punchy, but I'd be lying if I said this wasn't melodic. It's also refreshing to hear fairly simple punk played straightforwardly—and if there're crazy

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tech parts at work here, I'm not really hearing it—without dumbing itself down. Claims to feature at least one ex-member of The Assistant, but don't let that color your opinion; the two bands are at opposite ends of the spectrum. Available for a dollar and a SASE. –Keith Rosson (Nasty Intentions)

NIGHTSTICK JUSTICE: *Claustrophobic:* 7" EP
Wire brush. Powdered bleach. Scrub, scrub, scrub the concrete. Hose it off. Stain still there? Grit teeth. Repeat. When the stains you're dealing with are government control, general complacency, assholeishness, realizing that the world sucks in the long term and there's little you can do to change it, the wire brush and powdered bleach of straight-ahead old-fashioned hardcore is as good an antidote as any. The stains'll always be there and new ones will find their ways into you life; sometimes it's just fighting them—even if they're stronger and more persistent than you—is all that matters. In a Negative Approach, SSD, Void way, I mean. Not bad, Nightstick Justice. Not bad. –Todd (Grave Mistake)

NO GOAL: *Vital:* 7"
'80s youth crew straight edge that has one damn good song and four mediocre ones. I may not be impressed with the music, but I think it takes talent for them to give out a lyric sheet and still confuse me as to what they're saying. –Bryan Static (Third Party)

OFF WITH THEIR HEADS: *From the Bottom:* LP
It's not often that I identify with lyrics the way that I do with Ryan Young's. Obviously, identifying with lyrical content is what this whole thing is about, that, as a community, we share certain common goals and interests and we can all pile into a dank room and yell a bunch of stuff that gets our hearts a'racing. It doesn't happen as easily with more specifically personal lyrics, for me anyway, but on the rare occasion that it does, it's something else. Ryan has a way of conveying this pleading despair coupled with the Strummer-coined "hope in a sea of hopelessness" that hits me in a way only the songs of Damien Moyal and an incredibly small handful of others has before. This shit just knocks me out. Thematically, and musically, *From the Bottom* doesn't stray too far from *Hospitals* or the pile of 7"s OWTH have churned out in past two years, but I wouldn't have them change a thing. Devastating and inspiring—just unbelievable. This might be my favorite band on earth. –Dave Williams (No Idea)

PAINTED BIRD: *Selected Songs from:* 7"
Mostly instrumental with a strong Dischord influence (especially in the bass lines). Short enough to catch my interest and inventive enough to keep that interest piqued. Good stuff. –Megan (RFC)

PENETRATORS: *Bad Woman:* CD
Not sure if this is the new record they talked about in their interview a while back or just a quick collection of covers while they ready the new record. There are redone versions of "Teenage Lifestyle," "Gotta Have Her," and other Penetrators classics. Pretty strong takes of the songs I have heard many times in their original versions. The rest of the record is mostly made up of covers of '60s chestnuts like "Talk Talk" and "Dirty Water." I am not really a fan of recorded cover songs, but these are done fairly well. Hope to hear more from the Penetrators soon and maybe we will see them out here on the West coast at some point. –Mike Frame (Slovenly)

PERIOD THREE: 7"
I think the last time I saw these guys play, someone got stabbed with a broken bottle. Despite that, when I hear them, all I think of is fun and yay! (and all of a sudden my inner Ms. Tight Pants comes out, apparently). Everything about them sounds very Milwaukee, like it would fit right in with a bunch of sweaty kids in a basement. It has the feel of the happy bounciness of Danny's Modern Machines' songs and some drops from the same pond of pop that the Chinese Telephones drink from. Damn good time here; I just hope they're still together. –Megan (DNH)

POSSESSED BY PAUL JAMES: *Cold and Blind:* CD
Some pretty damn good Texas blues and folk stuff on the Swiss label of Lightning Beat Man. Not as blown-out as most of the Voodoo Rhythm output and, in my opinion, this is a good thing. Some bluesy stuff and a real folk feel on some tunes; there is some really pretty stuff in places on this disc. At times, there are even a few tunes that wouldn't be out of place on one of the Roky Erickson acoustic records. That is about the highest praise I can give. Just a great collection of tunes sung with heart and soul. Check this great songwriter out. –Mike Frame (Voodoo Rhythm)

PRETTY BOY THORSON AND THE FALLEN ANGELS / CORTEZ THE KILLER: Split 7" EP
Pretty Boy Thorson: They're a sleeper. It took me awhile to get comfortable with the idea that a plugged-in band featured an acoustic guitar. But the earnest delivery, the self-effacement, and whiskey-true lyrics won me over. The band's not flashy, but tenacious, like a weed growing through the seam between asphalt and the sidewalk, thriving on neglect, growing in a hostile place. I'll say it again. If rockabilly didn't off ramp into Fonzie-ville years back and empty out into a cul-de-sac of retro consumerism, these dudes would have been embraced far and wide by now. Cortez The Killer: A little bit of British Top of the Pops from the '60s, via cardboard and masking tape. The mastering's a little rough, sounding like was recorded through massive fuzzy ear muffs (and with a more clean, pop-leaning band, it's noticeable), but far from dismissible. With some more fidelity, they could be reminiscent of Bent Outta Shape. Nice split. Silk-screened covers. –Todd (ADD)

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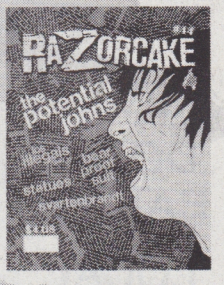
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PROHIBITION:
***Sorry for the Inconvenience:* 7" EP**
One of the latest in the ongoing series of punk bands coming out of Milwaukee that seems like it'll never end, ever. First thing that comes to my mind when listening to this is that there's a fairly heavy late '80s/East Bay influence to it. I'll even say that the vocals remind me of really early Screeching Weasel, before everyone lost their shit over them. So basically what I'm saying is, this sounds like the first thing to go on *The First 7"s Volume II* comp on Lookout! Also, there's a zine/comic book instead of a plain insert, like they're fuckin' Gas Huffer or Less Than Jake or something. –Joe Evans III (Repulsion)

RADIO WAR:
***The Rising of the Talentless:* 7"**
The first thing I get excited about is the color of the seven inch. (Yellow pastel!) That probably says something about the music, right? Maybe it just says something about hardcore music. When the needle hits the vinyl, I come upon the realization that snare drums and screaming will infinitely sound great together. They merge souls like prescription medication and wine. Simply put, Radio War is hardcore. Thrash. Screamo? Whatever the fuck you want to call it, they don't try to overcompensate for the boring state of hardcore. The sounds from their debut 7" are both cacophonous and melodic. Even when the rhetorical chorus breaks on "Gizmo Duck," yelling "smile and laugh" over and over, I still don't cast them aside because every other track on this EP makes up for the poor choice of redundancy. Four stars out of? –Gabe Rock (Copper Lung)

RAPID ADAPTER: *Live the Lie:* 7"
Oh man, this is a tough one. For some reason, it totally makes me think of the Grumpies, but without female vocals (bye, Amy) and pop (bye, most everything that is Grumpies). Take whatever is left of that, make it a bit artier and a little more lo-fi, and in my mind, that adds up to Rapid Adapter. And, that adds up to something I like quite a bit. Also, cover art by Matt Chicorel, awesome dude and artist. –Megan (Frame Of Reference)

RED AND BLUE / TRAFFIC & WEATHER: Split: LP
Red And Blue: Pretty decent poppy punk. It has a mid–late '80s Bay Area sound (RAB is from New York, though), but it also kinda reminds me of Shotwell in a way. The vocals are hella clean and annunciated. Still, RAB is pretty catchy—totally makes me wanna sing along. Traffic & Weather: This is some pretty raw, stripped-down melodic stuff from one of The Gibbons and the dude who does Salinas Records (and two others not mentioned in the "one-sheet," Jeff and Alex), who seems to be their main vocalist, who has a rather desperate yell, steps aside for one track to let a gruffer member take the mic. All together, T&W's sound strikes a melancholy chord, and the rawness of it makes it seem fresh in a progressively bland genre of melodic punk. –Vincent (Los Diaper / Mandible)

RESIST: *Resistography:* 2 x CD
I remember when I first heard their demo in 1989 or so. I was completely stoked. No frills punk rock, which, at the time, was becoming scarce. Shit was either pop, straight-edge, metal, Fugazi clone bands, and what became later known as "grunge." So yeah, this was nice to hear. PE has compiled fifty tracks total, and fourteen videos on to two discs; everything that was pressed on vinyl: *The Only Solution...* LP, self-titled EP, splits with Deprived, and Disrupt, and their *Ignorance Is Bliss* LP. Video footage is from live shows in Portland and Seattle, as well as a public access appearance in 1991, and a snippet of a nearly practice session in 1989. Members went on to play in Defiance, Severed Head Of State, and Detestation, among many more. If you're unfamiliar with Resist, think of anarcho punk but Americanized. Or think of the Pist, or a more tuneful Final Conflict. Good stuff really. –M.Avrg (Profane Existence)`

RIPTIDES, THE: *Mental Therapy:* 7"
Considering the severe rarity of finding a pop punk band creating any kind of primarily instrumental work, it's always worth taking notice when a group like The Riptides comes along to make an effort to do something new in a genre that generally suffers from an overdose of clichés, simplicities, and rehashed concepts (even if it does often produce incredibly fun music). In five tracks, the EP cuts through charged surf rhythms, warm, slow dance grooves, smooth throwback guitars, and a Western-esque tune about death with a spoken intro by who appears to be Blag Dahlia of the Dwarves (the only voice found anywhere here). As a quick fix, it's a short and enjoyable listen that doesn't leave much of an impression on you after the music has stopped, but a whole album of this stuff cranked up a few notches louder could potentially crack its own niche in a genre that desperately needs more than the same old teenage kicks. –Reyan Ali (Rally)

ROT SHIT: *The Worst Kids:* 7"
Apparently these guys got together to write the "fastest, most retarded punk songs ever." I've heard faster; I've heard more retarded; and, I've definitely heard both done much, much better. –Megan (Big Neck)

ROWDY TOWDY: Self-titled: CDEP
This EP is a bit of an anomaly. They're essentially country punk, but most country punk bands go in for a gravely or deep-voiced country-style vocalist, whereas here, singer David Groves is rocking the nasally punk rock sound. Each of the four tracks on the record are fairly different; "I Know" is a bass-heavy, traveling, "Ghost Riders in the Sky"-esque tune about running from the cops and making out in abandoned cars, while track two, "The Forest," seems to be from the perspective of a man who has been turned into a tree.



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Overall, I'm liking it; hell, I have respect for any band with an upright bass. I'd definitely check out a full-length if they release one. –Sarah (For Documentation Only)

SAY BOK GWAI: *Chink in the Armor*: CD
An erratic affair from this duo that melds punk, thrash, metal and everything in-between. For some weird reason, the music puts me on edge and a rush of anxiety washes over me. It's a level of aural discomfort that is disturbing in a way. Vocals that reach an extreme level of snottiness is what stands out here. The music has that recorded live in the studio feel. This band reminds me of a cross of Stukas Over Bedrock and the Dead Kennedys on a bag of mushrooms in the hot desert sun. This band definitely is not playing it safe and trying to fit inside the box. –Donofthedead (Edgetone)

SCARY CRICK: *Some Low Glow*: CD
This debut from The Rubes' side project hasn't left my CD player since I got it. The melody for the traditional song "Blackberry Blossom/Cooley's Reel" has been stuck in my head for days. This afternoon I caught myself doing a little jig to my imagined version. Labeled as folk punk, these boys display solid, complex finger work on the mandolin, banjo, and guitar. The bluegrass tablatures and group vocals is what this genre is all about. Some of my favorites are "…And Then I Pissed My Parachute Pants" and "So Long," but the whole album deserves a listen. Recommended. –Kristen K (Rube)

SEE YOU IN HELL: *2003-2007*: CD
CD discography of 7"s and their full-length released in the last five years. Awesome stuff. Fast, angry, and abrasive like a wolverine that's been poked with sticks. A blood-boiler. A rager. I want to desecrate graveyards. Random acts of mayhem. Go blow up cars and throw watermelons randomly. See You In Hell have made me twenty years old again. I will destroy dutifully with them as my soundtrack. –The Lord Kveldulfr (Not Very Nice)

SEGER LIBERATION ARMY: *Down Home*: CD
This album is pretty good. The band sounds a bit like (International) Noise Conspiracy, but with a whole lot more soul and old-time rock'n'roll influence tucked in under the belts. I can almost see the seedy '70s car chase movie this stuff could be the soundtrack for, and that's a compliment! –Mr. Z (Big Neck)

SESS. THE: *Agendumb*: CD
The Sess (pronounced sesh) kick out some over-amped, garage, rock'n'roll that would be right at home on In The Red or Swami Records. The press sheet says these guys are San Diego's version of the Black Lips, which is a pretty apt description. There are little bits all over this record that tend to stand out, such as the Beach Boys vocal harmonies that suddenly pop out in the circusy "Silly for Sirius," or the song "Don't Look Back" which sounds like it has a chorus melody borrowed from AM radio pop rock, like Three Dog Night. It's an interesting album which grows on repeated listening. I don't think this CD will change the garage rock landscape, but it keeps things interesting and is really worth a listen. –Adrian (Single Screen)

SHADES OF GREY / MASSMORD: Split CD
Don't know if it's always the best choice to put two bands who sound very similar to one another on a split. There really isn't too much difference between either band. Shades Of Grey drink deep from the well of From Ashes Rise. Even their style of lyrics sticks close to the F.A.R. style. Shades of Grey are definitely adept musicians. The songs are solid and sonic, but they need to inject a bit more individuality into their sound if they want to stand out. Otherwise they will sink in the mess of a zillion bands who have the Tragedy / F.A.R. sound. Massmord have a bit more going for them. The songs are more dynamic and explosive. They mix From Ashes Rise with some Tragedy. Not much difference, really. But it's there if you listen closely. If they, too, were to inject more of their own personality into their sound, Massmord could be a force to reckon with. Until then... –M.Avrg (Profane Existence)

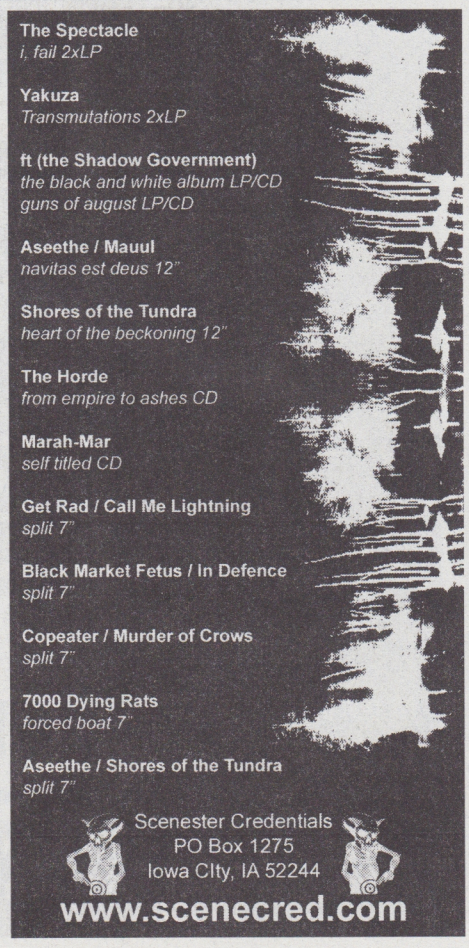
SHOOT IT UP: 7"
Terrible music, played fast.
–Megan (FIR)

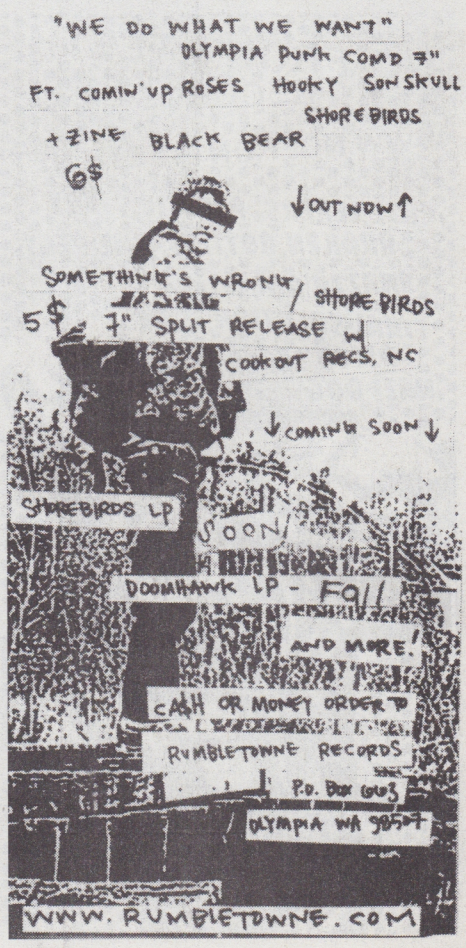
SHOPPING: *Cowards*: LP
Kickass peppy punk with nasally singing and a nice rough edge to it all. A less polished version of the Peechees in some—not a bad thing—really driving pop punk with some math angles in there, which is great. You can pogo and feel like the band understands your depression from work and love, yet feel aggro enough that you are sweating it all out when emo is just not doing it for you. I liked a Shopping split 7" and thrilled that the whole album lives up to that. Recommended. LP has a CD with two extra songs. This record should solve all those annoying drives home from work. –Speedway Randy (Do The Math, dothemathrecords.com)

SHOT BAKER: *Take Control*: CD
Taking their influences and putting them in a blender, the Baker boys come up with a smooth vanilla shake on their second full length. Heartfelt lyrics, tight riffage, and overall slick tuneage makes picking this one up a virtual no-brainer. "Falling Apart" and "All Paths Lead to Nowhere" are anthems, but each song will stay with you for awhile. "Lost Today"'s intro even reminds me of vintage Dag Nasty. Buy this. It is your destiny. –Sean Koepenick (Riot Fest)

SINKS: 7"
Two-track recording of blistering, distorted, garage punk from Minneapolis that reeks of basement funk, beer-soaked clothes, and good times. The blank labels on the record and lack of lyric sheet keep me from extending this review beyond the obvious. If I was just going by the music, I'd say "yes," but







for all I know they could be singing about child pornography or endorsing the nazi party. It's not like I can make out what they're saying. Lyrics, dudes; gotta have em' if you want to be understood. –Dave Disorder (Fashionable Idiots)

SKINTIGHT JAGUARS: *The Curse:* CD
This is the re-release of the debut album from this London-based hard rock/punk band. This band effectively blends the sounds of the Ramones, Motörhead, and Turbonegro to create a fast paced rager of a debut. I wouldn't say that this record makes me want to run out and buy all of the preceding singles and EPs that this band has released, but it is an undeniably loud and sleazy record that's probably best played at the bar or on the highway. –Dave Dillon (Zodiac Killer)

SKITKIDS: *Besöket Vid Krubban:* 12" EP
Nothing makes me want to listen to Swedes playing '70s guitar rock riffage by way of heavy, dooming hardcore like full color gatefold covers. Luckily, the good people at Room 101 Records know the score and released the record in the appropriate packaging. Take the Annihilation Time guys off the California coast, stick 'em in a Scandinavian town called Blentarp and you have the Skitkids' most recent masterpiece. Some may consider it to be over the top, but that's all part of fun. –Daryl (Room 101)

SLANG: *The Immortal Sin:* CD
Holy punch in the balls! The first time I heard this band from Sapporo, Japan was on their *Skilled Rhythm Kills* CD; they ripped me a new one that took some time to heal. This release sounds even more punishing and shows growth as a band. Thick and heavy Discharge riffage with added metallic flair is the backbone of the powerful sound. The vocals are so gruff and forcefully screamed that you can imagine spit flying into your eyes. A dirty yet punchy bass guitar fills the sound with a thud of bottom end and adds to the force of the music. The drumming sounds like the skins are taking a severe beating and barely made it through the recording session. All together, anger amplified. As more bands from Japan have come over to the states to tour, this is one band I hope to see on our shores. –Donofthedead (Schizophrenic)

SLOOP JOHN SCRONGE BERRY AND THE ROGER'S BEATS: *Meet Sloop Scronge Berry:* 7" EP
Arty school synthesizer pop. On clear vinyl. This is the record you put on at 2:00 AM to clear everyone out of the house and then the drugs come out because they want to stay and hear it again. And again. And again. Feels like: Binary spin cycle Japanese game show creamsicle smoothie. Think: Time is so little, time belongs to us. Never mind the nonsense, they're just John Scronge Berry And The Roger's Beats. –Jim Ruland (Replicator)

SLOPPY SECONDS: *Endless Bummer:* LP
It's been ten long years waiting for a new Sloppy Seconds record. *Ten years!* Junk rock withdrawal is tough, but I got through it. I thought I'd put my past behind me but here I am a decade later with a slab of snot green vinyl in my hands. Looks like I'm hooked again! Anyone who knows the band will know what to expect. Ramones-influenced punk rock with topics such as booze, girls, horror movies, the Ramones, more girls, drugs… Yep not much has changed, and that's the way it should be. I've always maintained that the thing that sets Sloppy Seconds apart from the others in their genre is the lyrics. Not so much the subjects (anyone can sing about tits and beer), but the timing and rhyme patterns that lock together in ways I'd never think of. Sheer brilliance! A note to the band: now that I'm fully addicted again, don't you dare think of leaving me strung out for another ten years! –Ty Stranglehold (Kid Tested, www.kidtestedrecords.net)

SMARTBOMB: *Chaos and Lawlessness:* 7"
A year ago, one of the first reviews I submitted to the good ol' *Razorcake* was Smartbomb's split with Prevail Within. I pretty much insulted them and compared their lyrics to the Casualties. I'm not sure what they did, but after this release I'm singing a different tune; specifically track five, "Standard Issue." –Bryan Static (Mightier Than Sword/Slab-O-Wax/Think Fast)

SNAKE FLOWER 2: *Talk About It:* 7"
One man, self-produced, psychedelic, shit-stomping garage rock from Oakland by way of Memphis. Massive amounts of reverb balance out the melodic riffs. Loaded with talent, Matthew Melton takes a forgiving genre and takes it to a whole other level. –Jim Ruland (Tic Tac Totally)

SOTATILA: *Eepee:* 7" EP
I swear, the universe must bestow the consistently finest hardcore bands upon places like Sweden and Finland as some sorta payback for all that snow. This is yet another release destined to be deemed a classic in the fjordcore hall of fame that's already stuffed to the rafters with simply amazing bands. This one falls squarely between more recent fare by region-mates like Rajoitus and older stuff by bands like Kaaos and, oddly, Brazil's Olho Seco. I don't care if you gotta trade an appendage or sell your soul to Soupy Sales, trust me when I say this needs to be up towards the top of your "must have" list. –Jimmy Alvarado (www.punkinfinland.net/kamanen)

STATUES: *Terminal Bedroom:* CD
A collection of four previously released 7"s (on three different labels) in a handy CD package. The underground world is getting sick with power pop (it goes through cycles. Yesteryear's surf and garage is today's power pop), and the measuring stick is simple: how's the songwriting? These Canadians, curiously but effectively take the Dilbert, casual Friday office-dweller approach. The bleakness of office bureaucracy is boarded up against Elvis Costello's early

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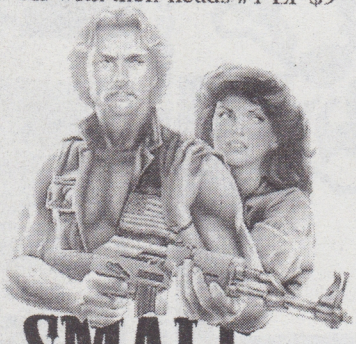

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work (I can't stomach the Burt Baccarat collaboration stuff, personally), and holds up to the standard bearers of the early '00s, The Exploding Hearts. The pacing, the drive, and the bouncy, fleshy bits are all in place. Even though I have half of the 7"s already, I found myself popping this on quite often to listen to the stuff I didn't have. Catchy, intelligent. –Todd (Deranged, derangedrecords.com)

STEADY STATE: Self-titled: CD
When I do reviews, I usually disregard any one sheets until I've actually listened to it. I don't want them to taint the experience, which is usually all they're good for. So at first blush on this record I'm getting a fair amount of Chuck Ragan / HWM and Against Me! love. For the most part, it isn't too overbearing or embarrassing; however, "You've Been Superseded" sounds a whole lot like AM!'s "How Low." Other than that, I don't really see any other dead rips on here. It's half decent Florida-at-times-acoustic punk with a really decent recording. Revelations on the one sheet: the actual liner notes include that Heather Gabel did the art for this, they're from St. Pete/Naples, and it was recorded at Crescendo. All of which explains a lot of what I'm hearing here. Anyway, it's definitely decent but nothing I'm going around screaming about. Very nice work on the packaging though. –Stevo (FDO)

STEINWAYS, THE: *Gorilla Marketing*: CD
The Steinways are funny, for two reasons. The first is literally. Every time I see them, I'm usually cracking up by the end of their set. The other is when their first full-length came out a while back, it had some really great pop punk songs on it, in between a bunch of songs that were basically three chords, one quick lyric, and done in about five seconds. Since then, it felt like a bunch of people gave them shit, saying, "Yer songs are good! Keep writing songs longer than like, five seconds!" and so this time around, the quick songs are gone (they're all at least a minute now), and it feels much more consistent. Musically speaking, it's not too different, as they remain a band who's clearly heavily influenced by all the classic Lookout!, Mutant Pop, and so forth trademark pop punk, but without just being another (insert-another-band-here)-core rip off. It helps that there's a very Off With Their Heads-esque "I'm broke/hate my life right now" theme to a bunch of the songs, as well as the fact that they don't take anything *too* seriously (including taking what would normally be some bands throwaway/"jokey" song like "Sweatpants," and making it a legitimately fucking great song). In hindsight, it's getting to the point where reading this will take longer than listening to the a-side, so I'll just end with this: The "I've got a five dollar bill and a coupon for two/let's go to Boston Market so I can show you how much I love you" line fucking *kills* me every time. Awesome. –Joe Evans III (Cold Feet)

TEMPLARS, THE: *Out of the Darkness*: 7"
After listening to the A side which features the track "Out of the Darkness," I wasn't really looking forward to the other song. "Out of the Darkness" seemed to drag on and was making me doubt if telling people I was a Templars fan was really worth the strange looks, but I found the strength inside to flip the record and was once again reassured that Carl and Phil are the two most talented, poignant people making this brand of skinhead rock today. It's been seven years since these guys' last release, and through line-up changes and everything else, these guys still know what they're doing. –Daryl (TKO)

THIS BIKE IS A PIPE BOMB: *Convertible*: CD
How the world changes around us. When This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb started years back, who'd've thunk that an entire subgenre would have sprouted from their seeds by the time this record rolled around? Having seen them quite a few times over the years, and not only owning, but actively listening to, much of their previous work, *Convertible* is—for better and for worse—what their fans will dig, and what they'll expect. (The first time I saw them, they opened up for The Causey Way, and if I remember correctly, they were touring in a cab.) Lyrically, TBIAPB is much darker than most may realize. The first four songs are about deaths and elegies, spanning from Willie Junior (a local vagrant whose death remains a mystery) and Andreena Kitt (a neighbor, shot repeatedly and killed by police), to Joe Hill (Wobblie organizer) and Fatty Arbuckle (an entertainer who was blackballed and smeared for life on the unsubstantiated claim that he raped a woman with a bottle). *Convertible* is like an audio scrapbook: of home, of friends, of shared history, of complicated love, of mental illness and physical sickness. *Convertible* covers a broad range deftly, from wanderlust so deep that the narrator imagines faking his own death to start up a new, anonymous life. And there is still a deep fire inside this trio; they don't roll over when gentrification takes out a community church, and sing: "When those saints come marching in, I hope they're carrying guns." All of that is great, and genuine, and honest, and I do enjoy this record. But here's the string in the back of my throat on this record: there's no outright flashpoint on it—some song on the first several listens that's careened from the grooves and raised my awareness and appreciation of the entire record. In *Front Seat Solidarity*, it was the firecracker of a song, "Body Count," that I couldn't shake loose. In *Three Way Tie for a Fifth*, it was the epic, expansive "The Ballad of Sonny Liston" that I couldn't wait to hear at the end so I could flip the record over and listen to it again. Reviews like this are the most troubling for me. I've only listened to this record ten or fifteen times; and there may be that sleeper song in *Convertible* that watersheds it all together, that snaps the puzzle into place. I have faith that there is… and will continue listening for it. –Todd (Plan-It-X South, planitxsouth.com)





TITANARUM: *Spastis Progressivus Aggressiorum:* 7" EP
Two assumptions I gotta make about this band while listening to this 45: 1) They must spend oodles of money on espresso; 2) They just hafta be living on a steady diet of jazz. These two assumptions are the only way my noggin can comprehend the audacious aural onslaught they set forth over the course of the six tracks here. Dude screams his lungs out, his buddies flail on their instruments, and all of it is done at warp speed. Okay, you say, I get the caffeine connection, but jazz? Well, they lay all that clamoring and wailing on a solid bedrock of tempo, rhythm, and timing changes that fly all over the place in *each song*, giving an extra added spastic, ADD sheen to the proceedings. Shit, if you listen closely, you can even hear a bit of Slayer in their prime in there, which is quite a feat considering there's precious little in the way of metal to be found. I know we're only at the midpoint of the year, but I'm gonna go out on a limb and say this will handily make it into the top three hardcore releases this year. –Jimmy Alvarado (Titanarum)

TOTAL CHAOS: *Avoid All Sides:* CD
I avoided all contact with Total Chaos when they came out because at the time I was moving away from Great Big Haircut type punk (Vincent and Cochrane were throttling me at the time, and early Lennon/McCartney had me in a noogie headlock). I also feared that Total Chaos would seem like a total joke to me with the punk uniform and all. So, after many years, I finally get a taste. And the gastronomical conclusions: sure, it's a bit clichéd at times (an early expectation of mine and one that kept me away), but it rocks often enough that I can doff my battered cap to them. Fast and angry. This is that wholesome meal that you keep going back to after trying some exotic crap at a new-fangled fusion restaurant. –The Lord Kveldulfr (Punk Core)

TROPIEZO: *El Manual de La Perfecta Cabrona:* CD
Absolutely essential, fast-as-hell hardcore from Puerto Rico. Sixteen tracks clearing in sixteen minutes! This is the fucking shit! From what I can make out of the packaging, the lyrics seem to be of a political nature and their packing is kind of cool, if awkward. It's a wide booklet with goofy cartoons in it. But whatever, who fucking cares about their packaging? This is seriously some of the best hardcore I've heard in a long time. Everybody I've played this for has been all, "Dude! What the hell is this?!" So, I'm far from being alone in being stoked. I don't care if you don't listen to hardcore anymore and just listen to (insert more listenable punk subgenre here) these days. Hell, that wouldn't be too far from my own situation. Just sayin', if you don't get into this, you don't like punk rock. Yeah, it's like that. –Craven Rock (Self-released)

TURPENTINE BROTHERS: Self-titled: LP
Now this is the kind of band that makes one excited about music. Garage rock done right. Raw, rocking attitude, and all with a swinging rhythm. The organ that runs throughout is great. Not overbearing, but essential. Giving this an air of cool that can not be faked. The whole time I listened to this record—and repeated listens at that—all I could say to myself, wide-eyed, is, "Fuck, this is great!!" And great this record truly is. You get your rippers, some in between, and some slow stuff ("Tired Luxury"). Great album the whole way through. You really have to hear "Time/Min" and "Forget Loyalty." Great songs! –M.Avrg (Alien Snatch!)

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD TO CANDYLAND: *Bird Roughs:* CD/DVD
Anytime I hear a URTC song, I smile. Whether it's live, on CD, on youtube… it doesn't matter. And this album is no exception. Recess has officially gone global with this re-release of *Bird Roughs*. This version is also accompanied by a DVD that has clips of traveling and playing music in Japan. As if the album needed anything else other than the music to entice you to buy this sucker. But I'm not complaining; this DVD is a pretty nice addition to the collector's edition first-ever Recess Japan release! –Mr. Z (Recess Japan)

UNNATURAL HELPERS: *Earwax:* 7"
Skewed, smartass Northwestern punk that sounds like the era before punk, indie pop, and grunge all shot out in different directions. I'm hearing some Half Japanese or maybe the Crucifucks at their blurtiest. If I had a band, I'd like it to sound like this. Or The Pharcyde. –CT Terry (Dirty Knobby)

US POLICESTATE: *Release the Chemicals:* CD-R
By the numbers hardcore, with nary a variation in the beat from one song to the next. While that may sound like an insult, and it's true that they ain't exactly breaking new ground here, they are proficient enough at the style to keep the attention span from waning over the course of the nine songs here. –Jimmy Alvarado (Age Of Risk)

UV RAYS: *Are Sick of Humans:* 7" EP
Five tracks of street punk rock and roll from upstate New York that comes in somewhere between the U.S. Bombs and the Unseen—especially on the last track "Party Rat." Loud and obnoxious. Sign me up for the full-length. –Jim Ruland (Feral Kid)

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: *Unlucky:* CDEP
VBS, who hail from Elgin, Illinois, has hints of Screeching Weasel and Green Day, which totally makes it sound like it could be some '90s-era Lookout! stuff that fell through the cracks. Everything tells me that I should be all about this. But I'm not. Parts of it aren't that bad, but those parts aren't making me think that I'd put this on again. The songs are just too long—or at least they seem that way—and they seem too orchestrated, too produced. –Vincent (Cassette Deck)

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VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Emergency Room Vol. 1:* LP and Book
Here's a comp worth picking up. The music is quality and the packaging superb with a 12" x 12" photobook of some of the bands on this record, and some who aren't. The whole shebang is a document of one year at the Emergency Room, an all-ages performance space in Vancouver. The bands tend to lean towards the punk end of the spectrum, with various flavors added and subtracted. Defektors remind me of early L.A. punk, similar to Dangerhouse fare. Petroleum By-products are the sort of punk Olympia, WA bands wish they were. Vapid remind me a bit of Bikini Kill, only tougher and nastier. Whitelung have jumpy rhythms that's danceable, but not disco. Mutators churn out neo no wave in a mix of minimal and noise. Twin Crystals are art damaged with a menacing undercurrent. Nu Sensae are raw and fast. The vocals are venomous. Gotta hear 'em! Sick Buildings emit noise to either contemplate or run out of the room. You pick. Either way, get this record. Only 924 copies have been pressed up. –M.Avrg (Nominal)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *I Thrash, Therefore I am:* LP
Finally, a vinyl reissue of this classic tape that was originally released on Bad Compilation Tapes. This is where I was first introduced to bands like Mob 47, Anti Cimex, Moderat Likvidation, and Enola Gay back in the '80s. Don't really know where the actual tape is; probably mixed in with my brother's collection. There are some bands missing on this release, like Raw Power that was on the original tape. It probably was due to limitation of time for a LP and probably because the sound quality issues of the more obscure bands. But, overall, this is not lacking in any sense. I didn't even notice it until I looked up the original tape to see who was originally on it. Schizophrenic Records didn't hold back on the packaging. The records are multi-colored vinyl for you collector nerds and an even more special mailorder edition is available. Even though this a great history lesson, this record is full of straight-up blazing, raw tracks of classic international punk. –Donofthedead (Schizophrenic)

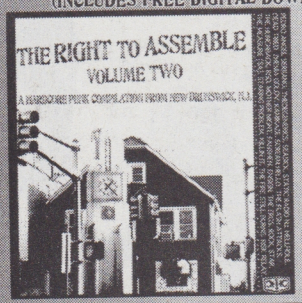
VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Killer Workout Mix:* CD
One of my favorite sets of compilations were the *Dry Lungs* series put out in the '80s by Placebo, the label that brought you fine music by Feederz, Conflict (Tucson), Mighty Sphincter, and the always faboo Jodie Foster's Army. Those compilations featured none of the punkier bands like the aforementioned as the more industrial wing of the underground (and when I say "industrial," I'm talking about sandbelts on sheet metal, not Nine Inch Nails) and some seriously odd shit. They were really cool listens when you wanted something a little different to clear out a party in eight seconds flat. While light on clanging pipes with wood mallets, this comp is no slouch when it comes to odd noises. One moment you're listening to some weird dirgy electronica song, next some punky quasi-jazz combo is screeching in your ear, and then suddenly there's two minutes of what sounds like someone trying to create dance beats with sounds from assorted video games. Bands like La Mere Vipere, Tickley Feather, Wigger Mom, Leper Colony, and Mountain Husband keep things blissfully out of whack, offering the listener stuff they're not likely gonna hear anywhere else anytime soon. Easily one of the better comps I've heard lately and also sure to clear out a party in eight minutes flat. –Jimmy Alvarado (CNP)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *We Do What We Want: Olympia Punk Comp Vol. 1: 7"*
I listened to this record and somehow I got "DIY" tattooed on the inside of my lip. Maybe it was the hand-screened/hand-stamped covers or the sixteen page photocopied booklet filled with notes, lyrics, and collages, or maybe I didn't actually receive the tattoo and all this stuff just made me want to. Whatever actually happened, the bottom line is there are some sweet, DIY punk bands in Olympia, WA playing some tight music. Very heavy East Bay influences, but nonetheless, a group of bands and people that are well worth checking out. –Daryl (Rumbletowne)

VERSE: *Aggression:* CD
Dudes are definitely onto something here. "Modern" hardcore that toes the line between the flattened, howling fury of Killing The Dream and the fuck it all finality of Modern Life Is War, Verse came out of left field and surprised the hell out of me. Smart-as-nails lyrics, musicianship that manages to convey both melody and a threadbare sense of desperation being juuust held at bay without losing any of its power or relentlessness. Hard to describe, which is generally the case with bands that are doing things right. I mean, the apple isn't falling *too* far from the tree here—it's still hardcore, right?—but all of the things that make it so easy to make fun of this genre (frenzied odes to being stabbed in the back, silly breakdowns, etc.) are absent here. And they've been replaced with challenging music, resounding intelligence, and, what the hell is this? A suggested reading list that includes William Blum, Pratap Chatterjee, and George Orwell? This shit's good; don't know how likely it is that the "average" *Razorcake* reader would dig it, but I've found myself playing it pretty frequently. Nice attack. –Keith Rosson (Bridge Nine)

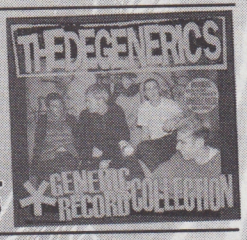
VETERANS, THE: Self-titled: CD
There are a lot of albums my four-year-old daughter and I share as favorites. There are also tons of albums where one of us can't believe the other actually listens to such things. I know for a fact she doesn't dig Rudimentary Peni, and I can tell you that I can't stand her forty-track Dora the Explorer CD. One band we can usually agree on, however, is The Queers. We can't get enough of

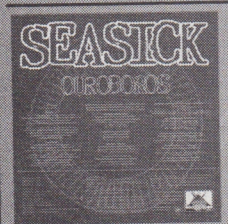
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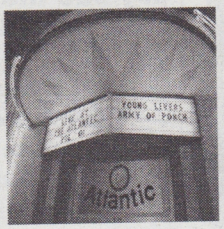


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those sing-along hooks. Now, if the two of us were to sit down one day and work to create a mix CD of all of our favorite Queers songs, the resulting sounds, harmonies, emotions, and jubilee would be of equal value to the self-titled album from Italy's The Veterans. Good stuff, yo. –Mr. Z (It's Alive)

VIBRAFINGERS, THEE: *They Vibrate!!:* CD
If you're anything like me, you sometimes lie awake at night quietly sobbing into your pillow while cursing the heavens that the Vindictives and Apocalypse Hoboken have stopped making albums. Thee Vibrafingers may not replace either of these bands in our hearts, but their rock is reminiscent of my favorite bands of yore. Mixing the vocal styles of these two bands with the power pop sensibilities of bands like The Briefs create an enjoyable amalgamation of good old times. Just what the doctor ordered. –Bryan Static (Turborock)

VIVA HATE: *Hateful and Hollow:* CD
This sounds like mid-'90s Epitaph/Hellcat music. They have hair like the Nekromantix. I don't even know if I spelled that right. –Mr. Z (Self-released)

WAIT IN VAIN: *Seasons:* CD
If someone were to claim that Trial's *Are These Our Lives?* LP was the greatest hardcore record of all time, I don't know that I could argue with them. Whichever forces aligned after Trial's first two EPs that led to the creation of that record have yet to reunite in the seemingly bottomless abyss of camo shorts and hilarious clichés that makes up most of the present-day hardcore scene. When I heard that Trial guitarist Timm McIntosh (whose post-Trial outfit Champion I felt paled greatly in comparison to his prior undertaking) was again teaming up with one of the best drummers in the genre, Alexei Rodriguez (of Trial, Catharsis, 3 Inches of Blood, etc.), I thought perhaps something incredible was in the works. Now, I know that this is a different band, and that *Seasons* isn't the new Trial record, but it's difficult not to compare the two. Musically, *Seasons* could be the successor to *Are These Our Lives?* but with McIntosh handling lyrical/vocal duties, the intellectual, seething rage that Trial frontman Greg Bennick once brought to the table has been replaced with a more typical hardcore delivery of less compelling content. Don't get me wrong, this is still head and shoulders above most recent hardcore bands' output, but I guess I was just hoping for a masterpiece and this came in a touch below expectations. –Dave Williams (Think Fast!)

WAR TRASH: *Distort Disaster:* Cassette
Lo-fi, filthy crust out of San Francisco. They stick like glue to the genre and make no attempts to venture out, yet this is still a pretty good listen. I love that creaky bass sound and the tinny guitar. No kidding. If you like bands like Asbestos, Neurose Urbana, Anti-Cimex, etc., you would and should dig this. Worthy of being on vinyl. –M.Avrg (War Trash)

WHISKEY TRENCH: *The Good Son:* 7"
Dillinger Four-style of hooky pop punk bands like New Bruises and Witches With Dicks play. Whiskey Trench supplies some of the same ingredients—the vocal trade offs that produce catchy choruses and breakdowns where the music breathes without a wanking solo to accompany it. The vocals sound like Mike and Bobby from the Thumbs, and the production of the recording lends a gravely undertone that you hear when you throw on an old Crimpshrine record. Lyrically, it's a little too mundane and self introspective for me, but, musically, the foundation is built tight. Overall, a solid record. –Dave Disorder (Dead Broke)

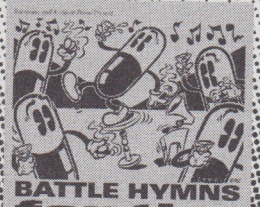
WOMEN: Self-titled: 7"EP
"Strangler" is tightly wound punk that proceeds to spin out of control, only to come to an abrupt halt. These guys remind me a bit of Career Suicide with their "what you hear is what you get" approach and sound—punk pure and unpolished. The second side with "Get Fucked Up," "Shark Week," and the strong closer, "Radiation" is the best of the record. –M.Avrg (FDH)

YOUNG OFFENDERS: *"Big Man, Small House" b/w "Saints":* 7"
Gang of Four's *Entertainment!* and Wire's *Pink Flag* are the signposts where the Young Offenders have set up their kicking team to score some extra points on a game that was abandoned well over two decades ago, before the game was over. (Gang Of Four went on to do some disco stuff. Wire disbanded, solo'd, and later reformed. Both are worth further exploration than the two records mentioned above.) If you're in the mood for contemporary music that's simultaneously skeletal, pristine, a little abrasive, and sick with hooks, the Young Offenders are in league with The Estranged. This is how I imagined "post-punk" would have evolved years ago, instead of turning into architectural sound sculptures that give math majors boners… Funny how that happens. Great stuff across the board. Fantastic two songs. –Todd (Deranged)

ZIP GUNS, THE: *Dirty Pictures:* 7"
A zip gun is an improvised firearm. One of the dangerous things about zip guns is they can blow up in your face, which is kinda what happens when you drop the needle on *Dirty Pictures*. It's got the energy and raucousness of garage punk but the sound is a helluva lot slicker. Three original songs and a nice cover of the Lurkers "I'm on Heat" all on a limited edition pink splatter vinyl. Nice. –Jim Ruland (Meaty Beaty)

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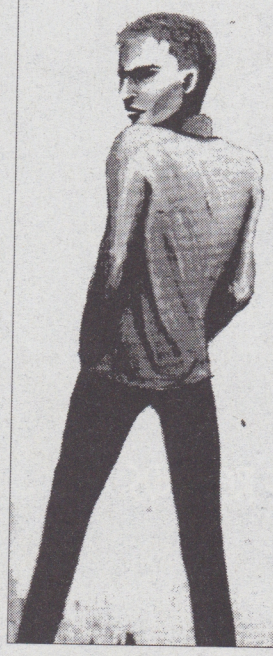

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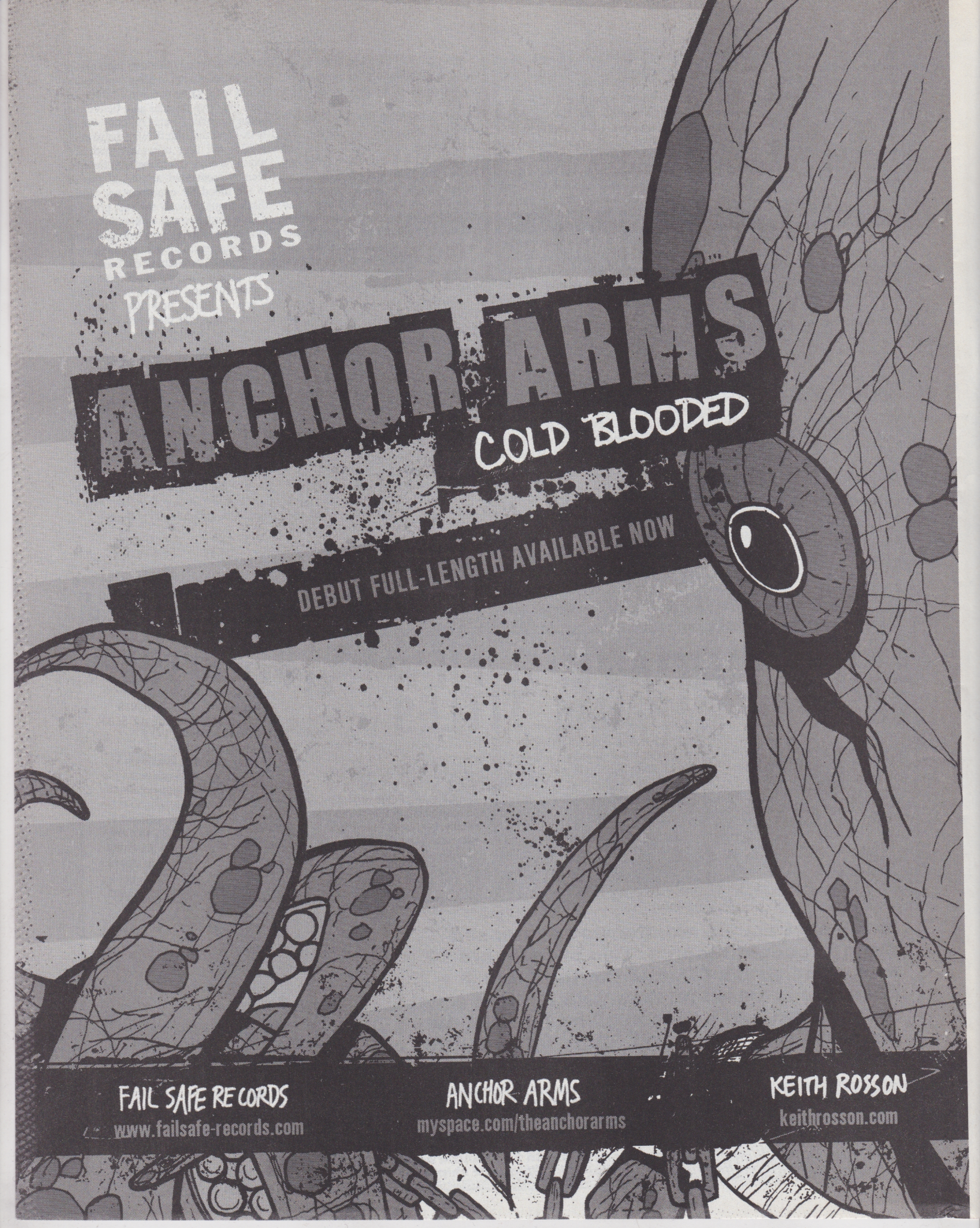
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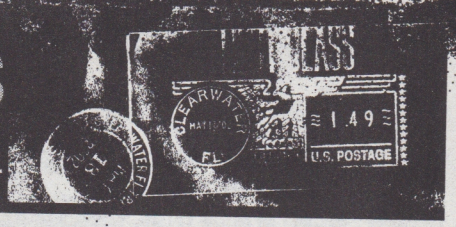
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ZINE REVIEWS

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"It's like a thirty-two page manic episode that's bursting with passion and urgency, riddled with grammar and spelling problems."

–Lauren Trout
RIOT GRRRL!

BELOW NOON #2, $2 or trade,
5½" x 4¼", copied, 48 pgs.
Quick little read here. The first half or so focuses on a series of short vignettes, starting from the time Angie was a little kid until she was in high school, that lay the foundation, mental and otherwise, of her eventually coming out. It was generally well done; some pretty nice, thoughtful memoir stuff. The second half is made up of snippets of journal entries or postcards she's written to friends and family. Second half's obviously less linear and ultimately less interesting—she should probably stick with the memoir stuff; as a reader it was a lot more captivating. Graphically and otherwise, it's pretty solid work when you consider it's only her second issue and she's only gonna get better. Nice job. –Keith Rosson (Angie P., PO Box 42123, Portland, OR 97242, belownoon@gmail.com)

BELOW NOON #3, $2 or trade,
5½" x 4¼", copied, 48 pgs.
Definite improvement from the last issue to this one. Not that #2 was even bad, but the writing here is markedly more solid; more poetic, more reaching, just all-around more entertaining. The layout's definitely improved, as well—nice use of blacks and negative space. So, it's a perzine that covers some pretty varied subjects, much of it revolving around traveling, restlessness, city life, drinking, and sex. The part that resonated the most with me was the piece about the ache to learn how to read when she was a kid, knowing that it would open entire worlds to her. I can relate, and she phrased the entire thing beautifully. Again, there're a few minor complaints—Angie definitely likes giving and receiving postcards, but seriously, it's not that interesting reading them in your zine. If you kept up with the memoir/personal writings, considered squelching the postcard reprints, and got rid of the terrible fake-Courier font, *Below Noon* could likely be kicking some serious ass in short order. –Keith Rosson (Angie P., PO Box 42123, Portland, OR 97242, belownoon@gmail.com)

BIG HANDS #6, $?,
5 ½"x 8 ½", copied, 20 pgs.
This is a well done zine that flows well from cover to cover and seems pretty eloquent. Topics range from inevitability to Thanksgiving curses to religion and back around again. It's short, bitter, and honest. I say get it. It is well worth the time and effort. –Will Kwiatkowski (Aaron L. Smith, 1104 Imperial Rd., Cary, NC 27511)

BLACK LESBIAN PRESIDENT
#4, 5 ½" x 8 ½", copied, 60 pgs.
The majority of this zine is the story of Terry's trip from the U.K. to Florida for The Fest in Gainesville, as if he were on a journey to Mecca. It's Terry's first time on a vacation by himself and it's his first time in the states. His logistical bumblings are endearing and he is in awe of palm trees. It's sort of like a punk rock version of the movie *Elf*, because it gives you fresh perspective on the shit that feels commonplace. There are also interviews with Lemuria and Blackbeard, and a bunch of zine and record reviews. –CT Terry (Terry, 14 Spring Gardens Terrace, CF241QX, Wales, U.K.)

DOROTHEA #2, $1.50,
4 ¼" x 5 ½", copied, 40 pgs.
In the intro, much is made about how these stories are "sick shit" and that they are the writer "sorting out some business." It's all fiction, super-short stories about things like necrophiliac cops, and a guy jerking off while thinking about his own mother. There's not much substance here. It all just reads like it was done for shock value. –CT Terry (Mike Baker, PO Box 1174, Tallahassee, FL 32302)

DEFIBRILLATORISM #1, $2,
8 ½" x 5 ½", copied, 16 pgs.
You know, Mike, writing, "So if it's shit, what are you gonna do? At least it only cost two bucks" in your introduction had me worried about the quality of this zine at first. But then I read through it and I think that you are a remarkable writer, especially for being able to articulate the thoughts that were flying through your head while you traveled. I mean, you tied in bits and pieces about Black Flag, John Steinbeck, and Catholicism into one story without losing focus and rambling where most people would end up getting all existential and self-absorbed. The cover and the layout are nice and clean too; I hope to read some more of your stuff in the future. –Lauren Trout (quit.talkin.claude@gmail.com)

FAKE LIFE #7, $2,
7" x 8 ½", copied, 30 pgs.
I've reviewed this one before. I liked the last issue better than this one. This is the April Fools' edition. It has a couple columns, an article on scratchy artist Gus Fink, a strange piece on death, a graphic piece pertaining to our primitive side, and an interview with gay punks Bromance. Pretty lackluster this time around. –Will Kwiatkowski (PO Box 1174, Tallahassee, FL 32302-1174)

FIRESTARTER #1, $3,
5 ½" x 8 ½", copied, 36 pgs.
Cool zine here. Same person who does the label of the same name. Did that last sentence make sense? This zine is primarily focused on hardcore, with interviews from Bane, Ruiner, Sick Fix, and Sleepwall. The interviews are well done, though mainly sticking to the usual. Then there're some top tens and a piece about the Crossed Eyes record on Sorry State. The inspiration is certainly there, and it should be interesting to see how this zine will evolve. –M.Avrg (Mike Riley, 2981 Falls Rd., Baltimore, MD 21211)

FRANTIC CITY #2, #3, $5,
5½" x 8½", copied, 36 pgs.
Cherry Boy has a simple formula: he seeks out his favorite pop punk and garage punk bands from around the globe and conducts email interviews. He recycles questions frequently, but his enthusiasm often eclipses that approach. *Frantic City* falls into the category of "if you like the bands already, you'll like the zine." Issue #2 has interviews with the Meanies, the Manikins, the Busy Signals, and, best of all, Pointed Sticks. I think issue #3 is even better, probably because I'm familiar with the bands featured: Radio Reelers, Carbonas, LiveFastDie, Teenage Head, and former Devil Dog Mighty Joe Vincent. Issue #3 also contains my favorite letter from the editor ever: "Editorials are useless and boring. It's the last one I ever write. Enjoy the read!" –Mike Faloon (31 rue Arvede Barine, 17000 La Rochelle, France)

GENEVA 13 #3, $2 ppd.,
8 ½" x 5 ½", copied, 60 pgs.
What I dug most about *Geneva 13* was its approach to the world around it. I feel in this modern world we're constantly being fed this idea that every place is the same, and it's not. It'll be a sad day when we all believe the United States to be a mere homogenous mass of fast food joints and big box stores. Finding the individuality of a place in its back streets and even in its history poses a very serious question: Whose country is this? Does it belong to the corporations and security cameras, or the boxers and mailmen? If you believe in the latter, send *Geneva 13* a dollar for postage, or a good zine to trade. In return you'll receive a very well organized and cohesive "zine of the local," which reveals what some would refer to as a random northern New York town to be a truly remarkable place. Be forewarned that there are no band interviews or record reviews, although there is a cool piece on John Marks who was a local jazz legend in the fifties. If you're looking for something with a fresh approach of where you can go with a zine, this is something you don't want to miss. –Rene Navarro (PO Box 13 Geneva NY, 14456, geneva13@gmail.com)

GENEVA 13 #4, $2 (postage- paid),
8 ½" x 5 ½", photocopied, 60 pgs.
The fourth issue of this locally themed zine from Geneva, New York, talks mostly about the local agriculture business, which is a lot more interesting than it sounds. Long interviews with a cattle auctioneer

and an organic farmer shed light on two professions that I previously knew next to nothing about. Perhaps more importantly, both interviews paid tribute to working class dudes with solid personalities and values. The article encouraging readers to participate in local elections and a contributor's list of favorite comics and graphic novels from the local public library struck me as great ideas to fulfill *Geneva 13*'s goal of reaching out and providing some useful information to their community. Throughout the zine, the editors also reprinted some entries from a poetry contest for first through eighth graders that they judged. My pick is "Poor Nicky" by first grader Astrid Olivia Lilly: "There once was a mouse named Nicky/Whose food choices were so picky/She saw a trap/and the trap went SNAP!!!/And poor Nicky was so icky." –Lauren Trout (G13, PO Box 13, Geneva, NY 14456)

GULLIBLE #28, $1,
5 ½" x 8 ½", 24 pgs.
Gullible is a zine consisting of trashy-collegiate-punk-rock slice-of-life stories and comics of crappy coworkers and getting to know the infamous and well-rumored local weirdo. Oftentimes, such a format is irrepressibly dull simply because such stories and comics—in their effort to get at some significance and even a level of higher truth—wind up telling stale tales that have been told gobs of times before. With such zines, the yawns come quick and don't let up. Such is not the case here, though. I found the stories in *Gullible* to be engaging and entertaining, and the great care that seems to have been given to grammar and mechanics (horribly rare in a zine, mind you) was a real turn-on for this word-geek. I guess one thing that I really liked about CT Terry's little mag, though, is that it reminded me of my own trashy-collegiate-punk-rock lifestyle in Milwaukee from about fifteen years ago without making me overly sentimental. As I was reading it, I could picture the people and places that Terry wrote about, only in the context of Beer City. (If any readers out there were denizens of the Oakland House or House of Garlic, you can picture the *Gullible* world.) It made me remember things that I had long forgotten, and the writing really was quite good. And thus I come to the other reason that I like *Gullible* so much: Terry doesn't make any condescending attempt to spell out the "higher truth" that these tales may stab at. Instead he simply spins fun little yarns that are foreign yet familiar at the same time, and leaves any sense of "truth" for the reader to find, much like Carver and Hemingway did. I did find some of my own truth in this, and I'm happy that Terry could point me in that direction. Also, I love the hieroglyphic-style pictures of Egyptian gods riding skateboards. Great stuff. –The Lord Kveldulfr (CT Terry, 807 Bergen 2-R, Brooklyn, NY, 11238)

INSIPIDLY IDAHO #1, $2,
5 ½" x 8 ½", photocopied, 60 pgs.
This is Ryan's tribute to two older female scenesters who he befriended through a local Weezer fanclub when he was in high school. These women made Ryan aware of the underground and helped him make the jump from the mainstream into punk, facilitating first bands and girlfriends. And then they died in a car crash. The whole zine is written in this flustered way where you wonder when he's going to start telling the story, then you realize he is telling the story, but in a way that makes it sound like he's talking about the story, and you can see that he is still struggling with the loss of these friends, ten years later. It's a fresh approach to writing, and a great way of telling "how I got into punk" stories while memorializing friends. –CT Terry (Enchantment Under The Stars, 616 S. Harrison St., Portland, OR 97214)

LUBRICATED #1, Free,
8 ½" x 11", newsprint, 96 pgs.
Santa Clara's *Lubricated* serves as a platform for the creative people who the editors know. There's fiction, poetry, photos, drawings, and, instead of interviews, some bands wrote profiles of themselves. They put this zine out to do something constructive, to prove that they're not in a cultural wasteland. As a zine covering a local scene should be, *Lubricated* is a time capsule, a PR kit for the world that keeps these people going. –CT Terry (Vanessa Speckman, 2118 Los Padres Blvd., Santa Clara, CA 95050)

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL
#301, $4, 8 ¼" x 10" ¾", newsprint
I didn't read it all. Again. I don't think I'll ever do it. Oh well. Interviews with bands (Antibodies, Red Dons, Sears, Underground Railroad To Candyland, etc.), columns, record reviews, zine reviews, news, a couple Ted Rall cartoons, lots o' crusty ads, scene reports, and all the usual. All my *MRR* reviews end up sounding the same. –Will Kwiatkowski (Maximumrocknroll, PO Box 460760, SF, CA, 94146-0760)

MY BIG BLACK BOOK OF GHOSTS, 5 ½" x 8 ½",
photocopied, 80 pgs.
Four big peeks into the writer's life, set up like opposites. We see him cramming for an Economics test at 4 AM in the university library, thinking about how much fun his friends are having, train hopping and going to shows. Then we get a story about train hopping, which melts into tour hijinx, which then gets compared to the CKY-esque pranks that he used to pull with his hometown crew. The stories skip along, reflecting when needed. The insane amount of typos is really jarring because of the slick computer layout. –CT Terry
(twelvestepsonyourneck@gmail.com)

PUNK OR NOTHING # 4
I didn't really think this zine was great; the best part of it is that it came with a CD. I like it when you get a CD with a zine, and they usually are about as good as each other. The band is The Rutherfords, and they are only okay in just the same way that this zine is just okay. I appreciate that people make bands. I appreciate that people make zines. But I would rather love or hate something than just think it's mediocre. The Rutherfords play pop punk about pop punk things in a pop punk way. In the zine there are some interviews, some reviews, and some editorials. The layout is bad, reminding me that if you're not good at using a computer, you can always use scissors and glue. The pictures are pretty boring, and the margin mouth is fed excessively. I wouldn't go out of my way to acquire this, but appreciate the fact that it gets done. –Rene Navarro
(myspace.com/punkornothingzine)

PUNK ZINE, three stamps and mailer,
17" x 11", copied, 46 pgs.
Man. So obviously a labor of love and so totally unreadable. Turns out that having twenty-some individual 11" x 17" pages stapled on the edges—again, there's no spine here, we're talking a stack of pages stapled together—makes this fucker nearly impossible to open, much less read. Still, it's got a nice cut and paste aesthetic, gloriously sullied halftones and a lot of passion. Focusing almost entirely on the Ohio scene, this one's subtitled the "art/history" issue, which is apt. There are interviews with various Ohio institutions of yesteryear (tenants of seminal punk houses, dudes from bands like New Bomb Turks, etc.) and kids actively doing stuff today (dude from Defiance, Ohio, punk artist John Rattai,), tons of old scene reports, newspaper articles, etc. All in all, it's a terrific homage to a scene and locale, and again, the love is apparent. Still, I'd definitely suggest halving the page size, having a spine to staple, and actually making the goddamn thing, you know, functional. Also, call me crazy, but I think *Punk*'s already been taken as far as fanzine monikers go. –Keith Rosson (James Payne, 115 W. 10th Ave., Columbus, OH 43201)

RATION #5, $2 or trade,
5 ½" x 8 ½", photocopied, 20 pgs.
Ration is a very nice looking zine, with a cover that appears to be silk-screened on grocery bag paper, and a clean, simple layout with just enough pictures to refresh the eyes. Inside are sixteen pages of writing, including the story of an internship at a public radio station in New York, with some memories of exes on both coasts. Good, believable love stories for those who don't cringe at the idea of their significant other waking up early to write them a (clean) limerick. The snapshots of love stories and interview assignments for the radio move together well, and then pass by like a face on a train. –CT Terry (Arwen, PO Box 170291, SF, CA 94117)

RIOT GRRRL!, $?,
8 ½" x 5 ½", photocopied, 32 pgs.
This is a split zine by Jolie Drama and Hannah Neurotica about the feminist music movement that changed each of their lives. Jolie's part of the split is about finding connections to other women and her own creative side through the riot grrrl community. Jolie writes in a very raw, stream-of consciousness kind of way without really focusing on telling a story that has a beginning, middle, and an end. As for the grammar and spelling, I wouldn't even mention it if it were just a few things here and there, but not capitalizing words at the beginning of a sentence, writing "cos" instead of because, and using the "&" and "!" symbols in almost every sentence are sort of inexcusable. It's difficult to take this seriously when it's written in a way that I can hardly follow what she's trying to say. Hannah's side of the zine tells the story of her teenage years. She was a Green Day-obsessed high school misfit who eventually found her place in the riot grrrl scene and an internship at the Kill Rock Stars headquarters in Seattle. I thought that this was the much better half of the zine, though it could have used some editing, too. Both Jolie

"I liked this zine, but kind of in the way that I like houseplants."
–The Lord Kveldulfr, *SOMNAMBULIST #10*

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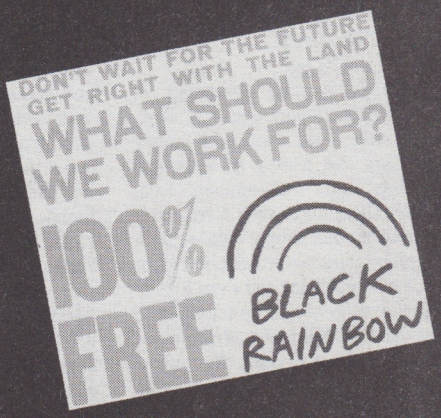


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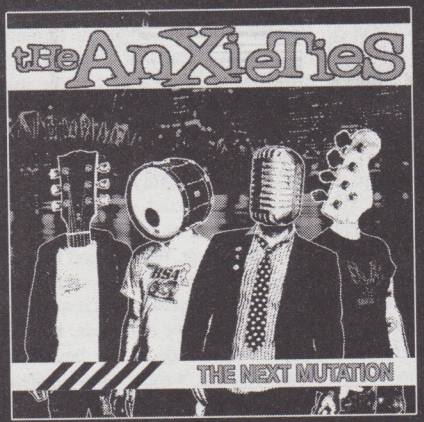
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and Hannah's stories are intensely personal—to the point of making the authors come across as pretty crazy. It's like a thirty-two page manic episode that's bursting with passion and urgency, riddled with grammar and spelling problems. –Lauren Trout (Lickmylit@gmail.com)

SOMNAMBULIST #10, $?,
5 ½" x 8 ½", 36 pgs.
Billed as "The Portland Issue," the theme to this appears to be Portland, Oregon. Having never been there myself, I can't presume to confirm the accuracy of the billing since only one of the features is clearly about said city. Overall, *Somnambulist* #10 was okay. It didn't really excite me in any way, but it didn't really make me groan, either. Tales of the publisher's life in Portland (?) include: going to interesting bars, observing local goons and nutcases, and ruminating on the crushing pulses of life. This zine takes on topics that have become pretty standard fare—so far as I can tell—but it's not really cliché or dull. Some relatively interesting drawings of what I presume is the local scenery. It's okay. Oh, to guest writer Dan Kimbro bitching about his job at the Lutz Tavern: you need to realize that as a day bartender you could be the only bit of brightness in the lives of those too far down and too far out to ever get it together. Stop complaining; drunks need love, too. So, in the end, this is not meant to be read as a mixed review. Rather, it should be viewed as a somewhat ambivalent review. I mean, I *liked* this zine, but kind of in the way that I like houseplants: they look nice and improve my environment, but I don't think about them, much less tend to them, unless I'm told to do so. That's someone else's job. –The Lord Kveldulfr (Martha Grover, PO Box 14871, Portland, OR 97293)

SPECIOUS SPECIES #2, $5,
5 ½" x 8 ½", offset, 80 pgs.
Really well done zine from Joe Donohoe here. The majority of the content is interviews, with a couple book reviews and some poetry. The interviews are well done, and it's obvious Joe is interested in the person he's talking to, as there is a bit of a conversational flow and the subjects tend to open up to him. The strongest interviews are with John Shirley, Fly, and Winston Smith. Could be because they were the people I was most interested in reading about, but they do have some interesting things to offer. Other interviewees are AC Thompson, Ivy Nicholson, Red Meat, and Jennifer Fox Bennett. I read this from cover to cover and look forward to more. And there better be more! –M.Avrg (3345 20th St, SF, CA 94110)

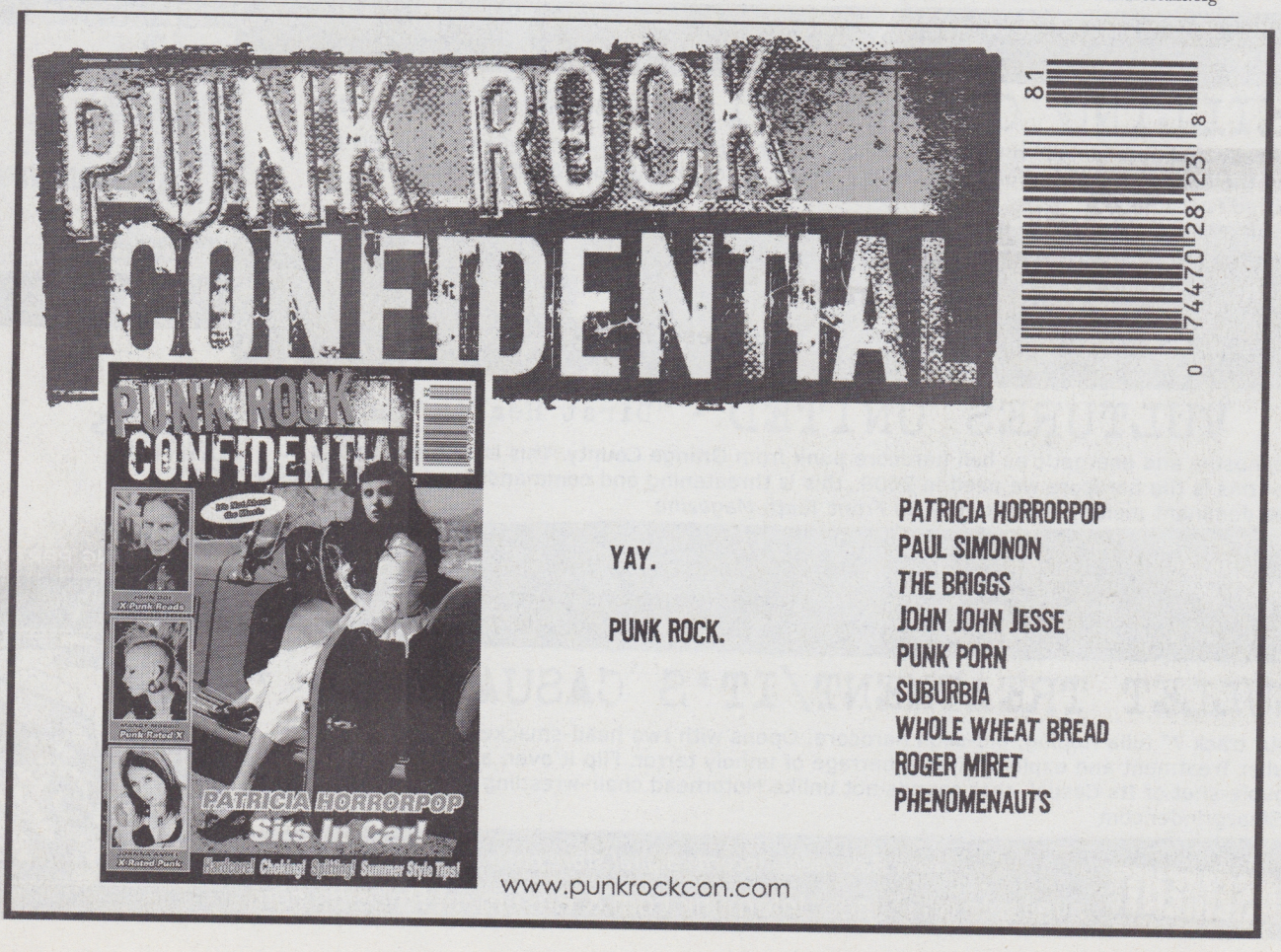
TECHNICOLOR POLKADOT #3,
$?, 8 ½" x 5 ½", photocopied, 28 pgs.
This zine is definitely way more thought out than the *Riot Grrrl* split (the other zine that Hannah sent in to review this time around). The stories are about the people who she hung out with during her college years, framed by references to the drugs they did and the music that was so important to them. Again, the stories in here all get awfully personal and Hannah shares a lot of strong emotions that most people would write down once and then hide to keep others from reading. –Lauren Trout (Lickmylit@gmail.com)

WHY DO ZOMBIES KEEP SHOWING UP IN MY DREAMS?,
$2, 5 ½" x 4 ¼", photocopied, 32 pgs.
A small art zine featuring quarter page-sized reproductions of screen-prints done for an art class. In this size, the prints look like comics, including a series of Hip Gear for the Apocalypse, like Bulletproof Underpants. I'm keeping this one and putting it on the back of the toilet (sorry *Snakepit*). –CT Terry (Enchantment Under the Stars, 616 S. Harrison St., Portland, OR 97214)

XEROGRAPHY DEBT #23, $3,
5 ½" x 8 ½", photocopied, 40 pgs.
A review zine where reviewers get their own section, like a column in a magazine. They seem to spend a lot of time reviewing each other's work, and some zines get reviewed multiple times (by different people), making it like a roundtable discussion. They only include things that they like, so *Xerography Debt* is like a greatest hits of what these people have discovered over the last few months. –CT Terry (Davida Gypsy Breier, PO Box 11064, Baltimore, MD 21212)

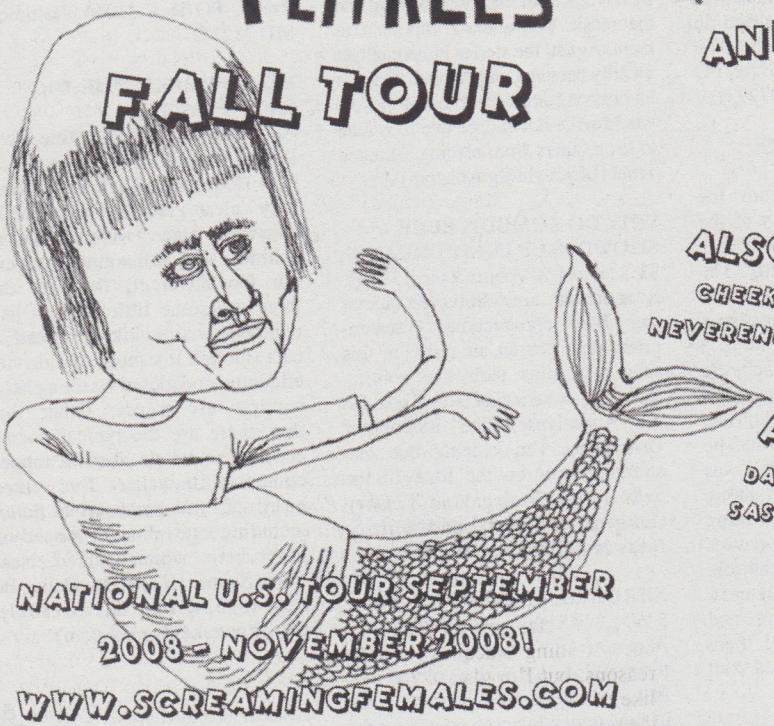
YELLOW RAKE, THE, #16,
free, 6" x 8 ½" 25 pgs.
An interesting little zine from Denver—the closest I've ever been is to Boulder, and it seemed like a very clean/green/environmentally conscious place (which I can get behind), and I imagine Denver's not too different; the fact that there are some little bits on here regarding using bikes instead of cars (though it's more of a driving etiquette) and global warming helps confirm my theory. Other than that, there are the typical poems, comics, an article about a rapper/comedian/filmmaker I've never heard of, and some other fiction including one about a pissed-off super hero, which I liked. Neat. –Joe Evans III (Brian Polk, PO Box 181024, Denver, CO 80218, theyellowrake@gmail.com)

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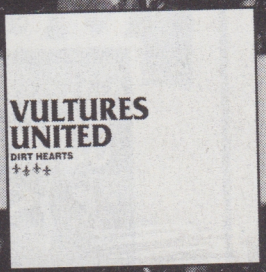
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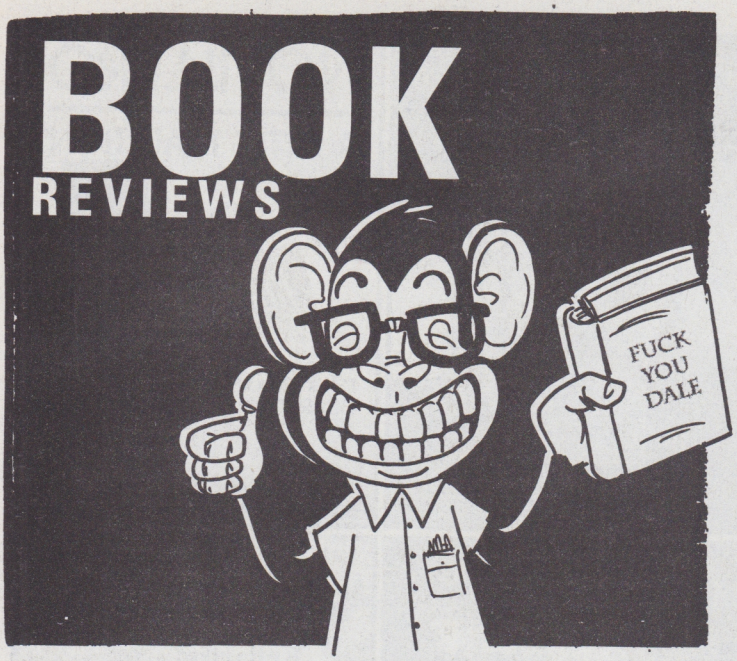


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BOOK REVIEWS



On The Lower Frequenices: A Secret History of the City
By Erick Lyle, 276 pgs.

Erick Lyle dropped the moniker Iggy Scam in 2005. I remember reading his zine *Scam* maybe eight or nine years before that. He's played in a gazillion SF punk bands over the years (Allergic To Bullshit, Miami, Onion Flavored Rings, Shotwell, The Horrible Odds), published *Scam* and *Turd Filled Donut* since, what, the early nineties? and has now joined the ranks of zinesters with book collections.

On the Lower Frequencies, as a collection of those publications, works incredibly well; but then, *Scam* worked like a motherfucker, too. So much of that is simply because Lyle has spent years documenting his life and surroundings—he's been homeless, he's squatted, been arrested, battled City Hall, been on General Assistance, lived in single-room occupancy hotels—the gift to the reader is that he's documented all of these things so well. If there's romanticism at work here, it's been tempered to a knife blade with realism and ardent humility. In relentless adoration of San Francisco, all things punk rock, and a ferocious advocate for the homeless, it was a pleasure poring over this thing and seeing how well Lyle's humor, rage, and flat-out goddamn *exuberance* have held up over the years and through the transition to book format.

Having read various issues of *Scam* at least a decade ago—the guy's been doing this for a long time—I was already familiar with some of the material in here. While the writing itself has held up over time, much of the charm of *Scam*'s original layout (gone are the cute drawings of little guys playing generator shows, drinking 40s with x'ed out eyes, etc.—not to mention the fact that Lyle hand-wrote much of his stuff, and, to me, his handwriting is just as iconic as Cometbus's ever will be) has been sacrificed for the sake of readability. Apart from the titles of each piece and a few photos scattered throughout the pages, this whole thing's formatted and typeset just like, well, a regular book. I, frankly, miss the handwriting and the silly drawings, the reprinted flyers in the margins; again, I'd be bummed if Lyle's voice wasn't so welcoming, thoughtful and, at times, wonderfully disgusted and pissed off.

From the infamous *Scam* Starbucks coupon story to trying to get *Turd Filled Donut* off the ground and into commandeered newspaper boxes, to an interview with SF's Mayor at the time, Willie Brown, where he suggests people on General Assistance move to a city where the cost of living isn't so high, to the last bits of writing in this collection—which includes a downright heartbreaking homage to the life and memory of Matty Luv—Lyle's style is firmly grounded in the intricacies and struggles of not only surviving the day, but doing it joyously, passionately.

The stuff's punk. It's also smart, well-written, and filled with, as corny as it sounds, a simple lust for life that goes to very core of the struggle of the poor, that flies directly in the face of a consumerist culture that tells us we have to buy shit to be happy, a culture that turns a blind eye to the homeless, distilling it down to, "I don't care where they go, as long as they get out of my neighborhood."

Inspirational, great reading all around. –Keith Rosson (Soft Skull Press, 2117 4th St., Suite D, Berkeley, CA 94710, softskull.com)

You Idiot: The First Book
By Nate Gangelhoff, 316 pgs.

As you can probably imagine, this is a collection of *You Idiot* zine so far, including a previously unpublished issue, as well as two issues of Nate's music magazine *Whiskey Plus* (again, one previously published, one unpublished), and some extra miscellaneous stuff. Apparently, this is going to be the new format, because to paraphrase, "The act of making zines is stupid," and as someone who has also spent hours in the middle of the night to make twenty-some copies of my own crappy zine, I say fair enough! For the *You Idiot* part of the book, I'd always been meaning to acquire more than one issue, but never did for whatever reasons, but I'm glad to have a nice collection. For the unfamiliar, I'd like to say *You Idiot* takes a close look at a lot of small suburban town themes, such as drugs and religion (since the average suburb has a lot of kids that like drugs, and a lot of people that love god), and simply takes humorous (but still very smart) approach, with reviews about anti-drug video games, and discussions about some sort of "holy" pajamas. I want to say it's very Cometbus-esque, especially considering Nate's musical history, but I feel like that's not fair because he really has his own unique style. *Whiskey Plus* is more of a music zine, but it's still got that creative take on it (typical content including "Reviews of bands I can listen to from outside their practice space!"), and the "How Not To Be In A Band" story was really, really interesting and insightful, enough so that I want to point out that Nate is a straight up awesome bass player, who does in fact "rip it up" (or something to that extent). Overall, I think the content here definitely justifies being archived in book form like this, and recommend checking it out. –Joe Evans III (Arsenic Books, PO Box 8995, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

DVD REVIEWS



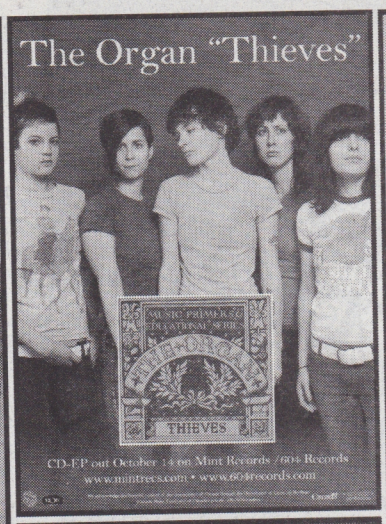
***D.I.: The Suburbia Sessions 1983:* DVD**

"Early D.I.?! Oh fuck, I gotta see this!" And it is every bit as good as I was imagining on the drive home from the Razorcake Norad-styled bunker. Filmed by the Flipside staff in 1983, all shot on one camera at their (D.I.'s) practice space at Sherpa Studios in Fullerton, CA. The performance is energetic without being forced. There's a certain looseness to them, but not in sloppy way; more confident, and sure than anything else. They run through ten songs, most of them which appear on their first record, which was released shortly after this video was shot. As well as the *Suburbia* movie. Casey Royer paces back and forth, using hand gestures and in-between song banter to keep the energy going. The songs are well executed, and the audio is good as well. You can hear everything, and for being shot on a single camera it's better than you would expect.

Speaking of the single camera; in many instances such a set up could spell disaster. Here, you won't really notice it. Whoever shot this kept the camera moving from member to member, sometimes focusing in on a guitar neck, running along that to end up with the drummer in view, for example.

There's also an interview on here recorded on the same day and at the same place. The mood is light, and mostly full of jokes. You do get









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some bits of information here and there. However, the audio is pretty poor. There're drop outs for long stretches, and at times distortion, so the voices sound like they're gurgling.

Other than that, this is a great DVD and one worth picking up. –M.Avrg (Flipside / MVD Visual, www.mvdvisual.com)

Government Issue: HarDCore Day's Night: **DVD**

Whoa! This is awesome. Classic Government Issue from all eras. Three shows total: from the early and raw to middle period and over to the post hardcore days. Not to mention the "Strange Wine" video, which must be seen to be believed. The whole package is a work of quality. There are liner notes from Tom Lyle (who spent two years compiling this video) and John Stabb (also interviewed on here about the history of GI in front of the Wilson Center, to give you a perspective of the time and how things have changed since then), each offering their own memories of the shows and making of the "Strange Wine" video clip. The first show is at the Wilson Center, recorded on July 25, 1982 (this is the show advertised with the legendary flyer of the three X's and bars artwork, with Scream, Faith, Artificial Peace, and Deadline on the lineup). John Stabb is punk as hell with the bleached blond hair and cut-off jeans shorts. Multi-camera shots and constant switching keeps the pace moving quickly. Songs in the set include "Teenager in a Box," "Religious Ripoff," "Sheer Terror," "No Rights," "G.I.," and "Hour of One."

The only downside, and it's really just slight, is that text will pop up from time to time identifying who's who in the crowd of this show. It's a cool idea, but it does distract.

The Philadelphia show from 1985 employs video toaster effects with solarized and layered images. Very much of the era. The band is more intense and overall better sounding. This show happened right before they went into the studio to record *Joyride*. Songs include "Plain to See," "Joyride," "Time to Escape," "Partyline," "Understand," and "Four Walled Hermit." The crowd shots from the ceiling look great and chaotic. The final show on here is from 1989, filmed at the University of Pennsylvania. The sound of GI had definitely changed at this point. Post hardcore tilted towards rock. This is actually some of my favorite material from the band. I know the purists out there may scoff, but hey man, the heart wants what the heart wants. The band is really on at this point from constant touring. GI were one of the few bands who progressed their sound and remained interesting, proving to be more than a one trick pony. There's a reason why they are a legendary band. Anyway, this show is shot with three cameras by university students, and there's even a smoke machine going!

Then there's the "Strange Wine" video clip at the end. Filmed at some record store in a mall in Biloxi, MI, GI lip synch to the song, with a sparkly background and cardboard Elvis in the background.

Great video, and really, it's Government Issue, so you know you can't lose. A video I'll hang onto for life. –M.Avrg (Dr. Strange, PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 91701)

La Escena: **DVD**

It's my belief that one of the biggest problems with the U.S. punk scene, especially in recent times, is that too few average punkers really have a handle on just how truly big this whole punk thing is. I'm not talking about album units sold and money made and all that shit, mind you, I mean just how far-reaching its message, its ethos, its philosophy of "fuck you if you say I can't do it" and its music is. Bored with the homegrown brand of noise these days? Take a gander at what's coming out of Sweden, Brazil, New Zealand, Peru, Israel, or even Hawaii. I guess my point is that there was/is much more going on than what MTV or your local "alternative" radio station is feeding you. But I reckon most of you reading this mag are already hip to this and have well-worn CDs by Ratos de Porao, Regulations, Abuso Sonoro, Kaaos and so on, right? Okay, I'll stop with the ranting. One of my big interests when it comes to punk is knowing the history of not just the bands but the scenes that spawned them, and *La Escena* is director Guillermo Gómez Álvarez's contribution to enlightening the world about the history behind the scene in Puerto Rico. It's in Spanish, but the producers saw fit to include English subtitles for those of us who are Español challenged. The story is told in a straightforward, no bullshit way with interviews shot in abandoned buildings and such, the grittiness of which serves well the tale of a bunch of kids taking the barest of resources and creating a vibrant scene from the ground up, a scene that continues to spawn some quality music to this day. Despite some challenges and drawbacks—the biggest being a dearth of live (and clear) footage—this documentary manages to tell its tale and get its point across quite well without getting boring or leaving one with "what was the point to that?" bouncing around in the noggin when all is said and done. In all, this is a great way to glean a little insight to what goes on in other scenes that get precious little attention, even when they really ain't all that far away from us. –Jimmy Alvarado (www.southkorerecords.com)

Lower Class Brats: This Is Real!: DVD

When digging down deep into the living dirt of punk rock, itself a sub-species of rock'n'roll music, you begin to feel like an entomologist as you discover new and exotic sub-sub-species. Curious little cross-breeds and inbreds with their own unique physical attributes and behaviors, their own specialized ways to show off their tribal punkness. Take this Clockwork punk sub-sub-species, for instance. It is, typically, a hardcore style of punk rock that's known as "street punk," but what makes it unique is that many of the individual musicians dress up in rakishly flamboyant costumes similar to those worn by the main protagonists in a 1971 Stanley Kubrick film entitled, *A Clockwork Orange*; which is to say they adorn themselves in all-white clothing, suspenders, and bowler hats like those worn by Laurel and Hardy. And they cherry pick the coolest-sounding "nadsat" words from the film and use them for scary-sounding song titles and lyrics. Major Accident and the stars of this particular DVD, the Lower Class Brats, are two prime examples of this Clockwork punk sub-sub-species. Now if I were something along the lines of a punk rock entomologist, it would not be appropriate for me to judge the various sub-sub-species, but since my own sub-sub-species is that of a *Razorcake* reviewer, I can mouth off to my heart's content. So, having said that, let me throw this out there: the whole Clockwork-o-philia and droog costume thing seems to me not all that different than the dorks who dress up like Barnabas Collins in fangs and Dracula capes and go to *Dark Shadows* conventions. There's just something uncomfortably "trekkie" about it to me. Then again, Glenn Danzig, Doyle, and Jerry Only used to dress up like steroid vampires and write songs using titles from B-horror films and that never prevented the Misfits from being one of my all time favorite bands. And then there was the Mummies, too. And, of course, the Hanson Brothers obviously got their inspiration, as well as lifted their schtick, from the 1977 movie *Slapshot*. So maybe I'm just being a hypocrite. It wouldn't be the first time.

I know the purists out there may scoff, but hey man, the heart wants what the heart wants.

Still, something seems different between those bands and the Lower Class Brats and it probably has something to do with the degree to which their respective tongues are firmly in cheek. After watching the brief "documentary" on this DVD and listening to these LCB gents wax philosophic about the cosmic significance of all things Clockwork, I'd say their tongues are not so much in cheek as they are doing fluttering whirligigs in Stanley Kubrick's asshole. Standing posed in various scenes of urban decay—sewers and the like—they talk about Kubrik's movie and Burgess's book with the reverential tones of a pack of starched Jehovah's Witnesses. And then, just to make sure you know they're still punk, they slip in a few references to binge drinking and a couple fart jokes.

But as much as punk is about drinking and farting, it's really supposed to be about the music and that's what's most prominently featured on *This Is Real*. To drive home the point, a bonus CD of the "New Seditionaries" demos is included with the DVD, which itself features footage (of varying quality) from LCB live shows dating back to 1996. So if you're a Clockie—or even if you're like me and just like good thumping street punk—you've got plenty to feast your ears on here. But as everyone knows, with the sub-sub-species of street punk, there's nothing new under the sun and LCB are no exception. As cute as their costumes may be, they're still only cranking out serviceable, garden-variety street punk. But what's wrong with that? Is there any street punk anywhere that isn't garden variety? LCB's music is anthemic, sometimes even catchy, and it rides on the chunky metal powerchords of a Mr. "Marty Volume"—who, by the way, with his non-Clockworky heavy metal hair and outfit, looks like one of Mick Mars' socks that somehow got mixed up into LCB's laundry basket.

So yeah, the band has a fascination and/or preoccupation with *A Clockwork Orange*, but I'm probably making too much of it. It *is* a great movie, and an even better book, and both are smorgasbords spilling over with lurid tales of subversion and anti-authoritarian themes that make you feel punky all over. It's easy to see how someone could get sucked into that. And to be honest, I, myself, have a similar fascination with an equally subversive and anti-authoritarian book known as *The Cat in the Hat*. In fact, maybe I'll start a new sub-sub-species called Cat in the Hat punk and my band will play loud angry music while dressed in big red bow ties and tall red and white hats. The lyrics about Loraxes and Sneetches and pants with nobody in them will virtually write themselves. Wow, I really think I might be on to something here. –Aphid Peewit (TKO, 8941 Atlanta Ave. #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646)

I'd say their tongues are not so much in cheek as they are doing fluttering whirligigs in Stanley Kubrick's asshole. Just to make sure you know they're still punk, they slip in a few references to binge drinking and a couple fart jokes.

Richard Kern: Extra Action: **DVD**

Hot girls being naked doing things very seriously. Is that for you? Kern is well-known for his photography of naked gals, more erotic than porno, but those terms can be debated forever. He is really a great photographer. The video is more handheld matter-of-fact stuff, with posing, stretching, playing with toys, taking things off. Much more arty than porno, but too many close-ups and insertions to be burlesque. Girls are, yes, all pretty hot, but this is more old school in a way—no suicide girls, tattoos, or giggling—these girls are either completely stoic or *really* into it, with the occasional smile. No words or guys or scripts, just naked gals doing stuff over Thurston Moore's minimal score. The extras on the disc are some of Kern's older films and videos, inspired by 42nd Street, '70s sleaze, and exploitation days, which are not nearly as shocking or evocative as what was playing in those theaters back then. One film is mostly footage he shot simply walking down that street in those scummy days, which looks incredible. Whoever lives across the street from Kern is either pissed off beyond belief or one of the happiest people on earth. –Speedway Randy (MVDvisual, richardkern.com)

X-Ray Visions: **DVD**

The X-Ray was a club that existed in Portland, Oregon, from 1989-1994. It was known for its very eclectic booking policy, in that pretty much anyone with the desire could take the stage and do their thing. Its story is told here in a film directed by Ben Ellis, one of the club's founders, and features oodles of interviews and maddeningly short snippets of assorted live performances. What he's concocted is an almost love letter to the scene that coalesced around the club—its eccentric musicians; the odd characters who made up the crowd; the free-form, DIY attitude it fostered—that also serves as a snapshot of one of those brief flashpoints where true magic happens. Too often films about scenes feel very snooty and exclusionary, but though it is geared to a specific audience, this film's focus is handled in such a way that even those of us who weren't there feel almost a sense of inclusion, leaving us wishing we'd been there for the fun, but not making us feel like assholes 'cause we weren't. Not a bad way to spend an hour, by any stretch. –Jimmy Alvarado (Microcosm Publishing, 222 S. Rogers St., Bloomington, IN 47404)

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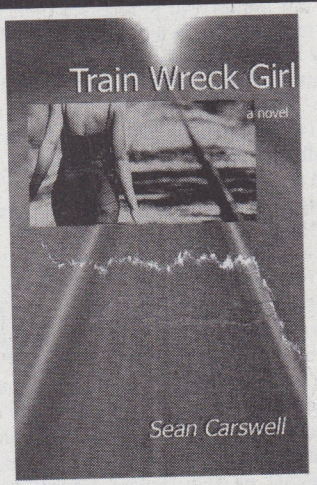




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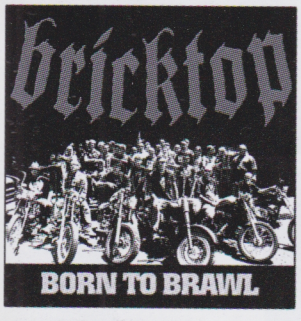


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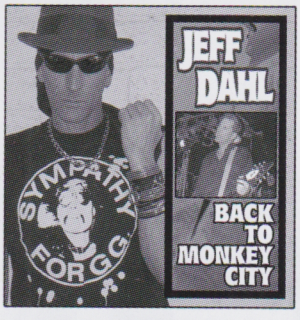
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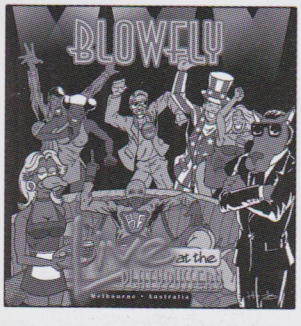
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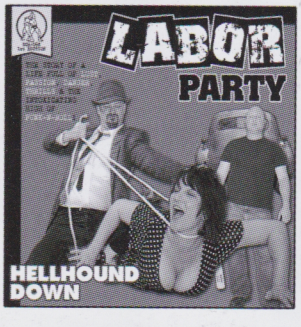
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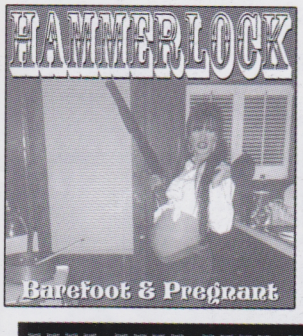
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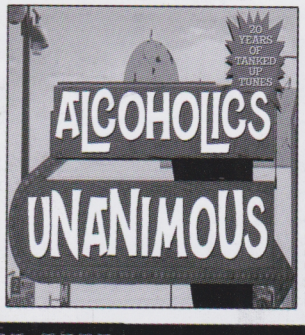
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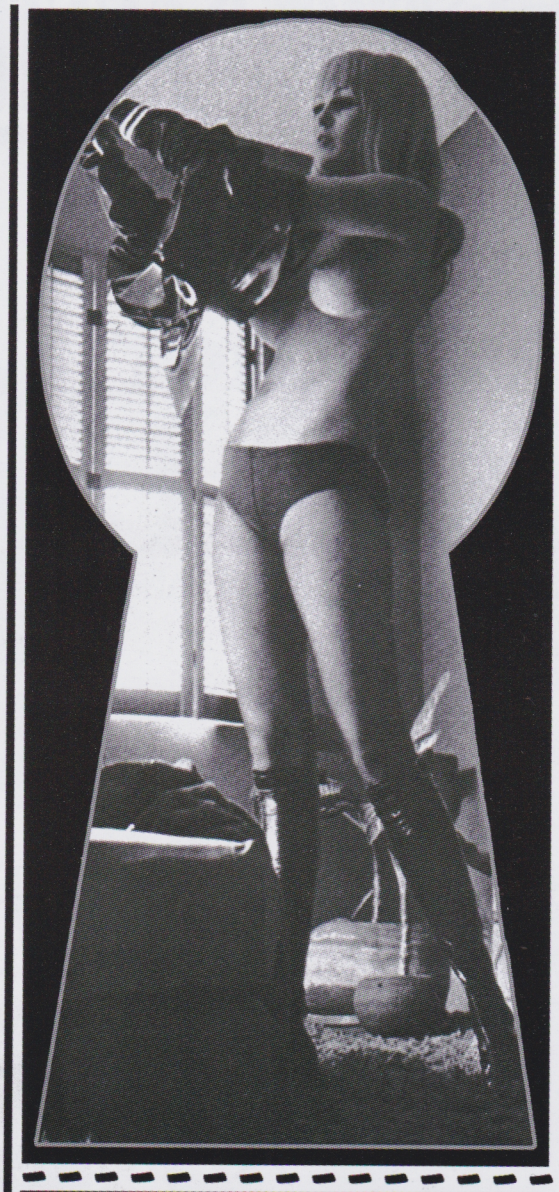
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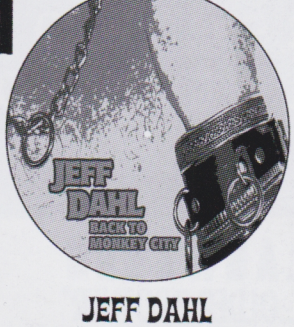
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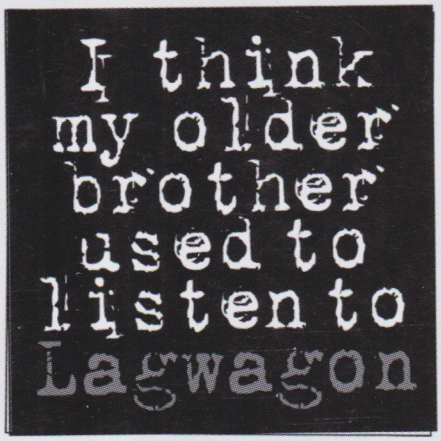


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